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ABSTRACT

This report presents 1981-82 evaluation results for the Special Program Schools Scheme (SPSS), a federally funded program for disadvantaged government schools in Queensland, Australia. The report provides both descriptive and evaluative information to the SPSS Advisory Committee to facilitate decisions for program improvement. Chapter 1 discusses data collection, analysis, and reporting procedures for both Phase I (descriptive) and Phase II (evaluative). Chapter 2 describes the SPSS Task Force, the 199 SPSS schools and the 535 SPSS programs (both system and school initiated). Chapter 3 evaluates SPSS organizational requirements and procedures sequentially from entering to exiting the scheme. Chapter 4 examines the programs themselves and presents characteristics of a 'good' SPSS program. Chapter 5 offers guidelines for reviewing the SPSS in three major areas: (1) what the scheme requires of schools; (2) the scheme's organizational procedures; and (3) the function of the scheme in schools. The appendices contain: (1) the Phase I Proforma used to code information from school program files; (2) procedures for selecting the 25 SPSS schools visited in Phase II; (3) Phase II interview question form for principals; (4) Phase II interview question form for teachers and community representatives; (5) observation checklist for equipment/material; (6) tables showing Phase II school interview participants; and (7) list of observed problems with equipment and materials. (BS)

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EVALUATION OF THE SPECIAL PROGRAM SCHOOLS SCHEME

Christopher Dean

Research Services Branch
Department of Education
Queensland

March 1983

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1. INTRODUCTION

During 1981-82, an evaluation of the Special Program Schools Scheme was conducted by the Research Branch of the Department of Education, Queensland. The evaluation was undertaken at the request of the Chairman of the Special Program Schools Scheme Advisory Committee.

1.1 THE SPECIAL PROGRAM SCHOOLS SCHEME

The Special Program Schools Scheme has its origins in the 1973 report to the Federal Government of the Interim Committee for the Schools Commission. This report, *Schools in Australia*, formed the basis of legislation enacted as the *States Grants (Schools) Act* 1973. Under this Act, grants were made available in accordance with the needs delineated in the Committee's report, and several programs designed to meet those needs were set up. One of these programs was the Disadvantaged Schools Program. The part of the program which caters for disadvantaged government schools in Queensland has since become known as the Special Program Schools Scheme (hereafter called 'SPSS' or 'the Scheme'), and is administered by a Task Force under the auspices of the Department of Education, Queensland.*

The objectives of the Scheme may be outlined as follows:

1. to promote equality of opportunity so that all children should be assisted to gain the fundamental skills necessary to participate fully and equally in society and have the opportunity to share in its culture;
2. to provide an enjoyable and fruitful schooling that is meaningful and satisfying in itself, not merely a preparation for later life; and
3. to allow schools to interact with their communities so that they become 'open' institutions.

* Non-government schools in Queensland are catered for by a separate administrative entity called the Disadvantaged Schools Program — Non-Government Schools. It is administered by the Catholic Education Office and does not form part of this present study.

1.2 PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION

The evaluation was designed to provide both descriptive and evaluative information to the SPSS Advisory Committee to facilitate the improvement of the Scheme, especially as it affects the delivery end of the system, the schools themselves.

In the descriptive phase of the evaluation, data were collected to provide:

- background information on the operation of the Scheme at the systems level; and
- summary statistical information on the number of schools and pupils involved in the Scheme, the types of programs funded and the pattern in which funding had occurred over the past few years.

In the evaluative phase of the project, data were collected from schools to provide:

- information on the operation of the Scheme at the school level;
- feedback concerning the organisational aspects of the Scheme as perceived at the school level; and
- opinions on the various SPSS programs in practice.

1.3 EVALUATION PROCEDURE

Descriptive information (Phase I)

Basic information on the operation of SPSS and of the schools belonging to the Scheme was collected through informal discussions and contact with SPSS staff on various occasions throughout the duration of the project. Additional information on pupil enrolments was gathered by reference to census figures supplied by the Planning Branch of the Department of Education.

Specific information on school programs financed by the Scheme was collected by examining the files of individual program proposals submitted by schools. All programs that had been processed by the SPSS Advisory Committee between January 1979 and March 1981 were included in the analysis. Altogether, 621 program submissions were identified and summarised to produce quantitative data on aspects such as the types of programs requested and funded, the proposed foci, beneficiaries and outcomes of the programs, and the funding patterns occurring over the period.*

In order to systematise an examination of the school programs, relevant information contained in each program file was coded on to a proforma which was specifically developed for the purpose (Appendix 1). The proforma data formed the basis for later computer analysis of the submissions.

Coding of the 621 programs was carried out by two Research Branch personnel over the period April-June 1981. Coding reliability was facilitated by the use of a coding guide and the periodic dual coding of the same program file by the two personnel, followed by appropriate discussion.

Evaluative information (Phase II)

During Phase II of the evaluation, 25 SPSS schools were visited by an evaluation team of two Research Branch personnel. The basis for the selection of these 25 schools was that they should be as representative as possible of the 199 schools on the Scheme. Consideration was given to school type and size, geographical location, the number and types of SPSS programs, and the experience of school administrators with the Scheme.

* Approximately 16 program submissions were not summarised due to their non-availability.

While schools were not selected through any random assignment procedure, it is the evaluators' opinion that sufficient care was taken in selecting schools to enable the findings to be regarded as generally representative of the total number of SPSS schools on most of the issues that are reported. Further details of the school selection procedure and the list of visited schools are found in Appendix 2.

For the purpose of conducting Phase II of the evaluation, three major instruments were developed to be used during visits to selected SPSS schools.

(i) An Interview Schedule for use with administrators in SPSS schools. (Appendix 3)
(ii) An Interview Schedule for use with teachers and community persons who had experience with the Scheme. This Schedule was adapted from the administrators Schedule. (Appendix 4)
(iii) An Observation Checklist for recording data on equipment and materials purchased through SPSS funds. (Appendix 5)

Phase II school visits were conducted during April-May 1982. In the 25 selected schools, the following four evaluation activities took place:

(i) Twenty-four administrator interviews were conducted, each interview lasting approximately one and one-half hours. Only in one of the schools was an administrator interview not held.
(ii) Thirty-seven interviews were conducted with teachers and community people, each interview lasting approximately 30 minutes. All interviews were conducted in Class 1, 2 or 3 schools and were arranged by the principal of each school. Principals were requested to schedule interviews with teaching personnel and community persons who had been involved in SPSS programs over the past two years.
In the majority of schools, most teaching personnel involved in SPSS were interviewed. However, it was not possible to interview all involved community persons due to their other commitments.
(iii) When the occasion arose, informal discussions were also carried out with other school personnel including teacher aides employed through SPSS funding.*
(iv) Finally, and usually at the conclusion of the interviews, the researchers were shown around the school to observe school initiated programs in practice. Where it was an equipment and materials program, this enabled the completion of the Observation Checklist at the conclusion of each visit.

The collection, analysis and reporting of the interview data were undertaken using the following approaches.

- The interview format was planned but informal and conversational. This approach was facilitated by the design of the interview schedules which allowed the interviewee to tell his/her own 'story' from beginning to end. Given the informality of this interview situation, the interview schedule was not always followed sequentially, but by the end of each interview most items had been covered, thereby enabling some conclusions to be drawn.
- The two researchers were present at most interviews, thus allowing later crosschecking of conclusions. (Only in four interviews was this not possible.)
- To provide consistency of operation, the responsibility for conducting the administrator interviews and subsequent analysis and drafting of results was given to the same one researcher and the teacher interviews to the other. The writing of the reports was the task of the senior researcher.

* Originally, it was planned to interview all SPSS teacher aides but more often than not, their employment hours (sometimes only five hours per week) did not coincide with the time of the school visit. It also became clear that the SPSS funding source was quite incidental to the normal tasks undertaken by teacher aides.

- During the interviews, Researcher 1, say, led an interview while Researcher 2 took notes. At the same time, most interviews were taped. (Only on four occasions was a tape not used.)
- After the interviews, Researcher 1 checked the notes of Researcher 2 against his own impressions and also the tape of interview.
- Data were summarised, using both notes and tapes, on all issues arising out of the interviews. Quotes were noted and frequent discussion was held between researchers to check summaries.
- As school visits progressed, data were built up on each issue so as to allow clarification, amendment, rejection or confusion of the issue. As interviews proceeded, new issues also arose and were built upon. Individual interview summaries were produced for each issue that had emerged during a particular interview. All interview summaries for a particular issue were then examined with a view to summarising the issue itself.
- Interview data were analysed in such a way that the unit of analysis was the 'interview' and not the 'interviewee'. In a minority of cases (six of the 61 interviews) there was more than one interviewee present, but since a consensus view on most issues tended to emerge in these interviews it appeared to be more appropriate to analyse on an interview basis rather than accounting for what each particular interviewee said. Consequently, where there is quantitative data reported in the results section, the responses are usually calculated out of the number of interviews in which the issue was discussed.

Further details on the interview participants are provided in Appendix 6.

1.4 EVALUATION REPORTS

During the course of conducting the evaluation, four documents were produced for the purpose of disseminating the findings to the Committee, SPSS schools and other interested bodies.

- Evaluation of the Special Program Schools Scheme: Phase I Interim Report. Research Branch, November 1981
- Evaluation of the Special Program Schools Scheme: Phase I Set of Tables. Research Branch, November 1981
- Evaluation of the Special Program Schools Scheme: Summary of Phase II Findings. Interim Report. Research Branch, October 1982
- Evaluation of the Special Program Schools Scheme: Phase II Report. Research Branch, October 1982

This present paper is the fifth and final (evaluation series) report of the project, and is an edited compilation of the information presented in the previous four reports. The remainder of the report is divided into four major sections.

Chapter 2 summarises the most important findings of Phase I and presents an overview of the Scheme together with essential summary statistical information.

Chapter 3 concentrates on the organisational aspects of the Scheme as perceived at the school level (Phase II) and proceeds in chronological sequence from those procedures associated with 'entering the Scheme' to 'exiting from it'.

Chapter 4 presents school level opinions on SPSS programs in practice and looks separately at the two funding types being implemented — school initiated programs and systems initiated programs. It is mostly in this chapter that the 'spirit' of the Scheme is conveyed.

Finally, Chapter 5 provides guidelines to the SPSS Advisory Committee which may be used in any future review of the Scheme. This chapter draws together the findings of the evaluation by referring to the summaries or conclusions and recommendations presented at the end of Chapters 2, 3 and 4.

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE SCHEME, ITS SCHOOLS AND PROGRAMS

This section summarises information collected during Phase I of the project and is presented under the following major headings:

- the SPSS Task Force;
- SPSS schools;
- SPSS programs; and
- description summary.

2.1 THE SPSS TASK FORCE

As mentioned in the Introduction, SPSS is administered by a Task Force under the auspices of the Department of Education, Queensland. The Task Force consists of an Advisory Committee and an administrative section.

The Advisory Committee is the decision making body of the Scheme and meets regularly (usually once per month) to deliberate on SPSS activities. The committee comprises representatives from a wide range of interested educational bodies. These bodies include:

- Department of Education, Queensland;
- Catholic Education Office, Queensland;
- Schools Commission;
- Queensland Teachers Union;
- Colleges of Advanced Education; and
- Queensland Council of Parents and Citizens Association.

The decisions of the Advisory Committee are implemented by an administrative section consisting at the time of the evaluation of the following personnel:

- Co-ordinator;
- two Field Officers (seconded teachers); and
- three clerical staff.

A major duty of the Co-ordinator and Field Officers is to visit and communicate with SPSS schools throughout the State. The aims of this field activity are to:

- provide a personal link between the school and the administrative section of the Scheme;
- give advice on the mechanics of submission preparation;
- disseminate information about successful programs already funded; and
- inform parents and community of the Scheme and what can be done.

In the light of the direct contact possible with SPSS schools, the Co-ordinator has the responsibility of making funding recommendations to the Committee (of which he is also a member) and the field officers act as advisory resource personnel.

2.2 SPSS SCHOOLS

Table 1 gives details of the type and size of government schools belonging to the Scheme in March 1982. At this time, the total of 199 schools accounted for approximately 17 per cent of Queensland government schools enrolling primary and secondary pupils. The schools enrolled approximately 12 per cent of all State primary and secondary pupils.

Table 1: Schools belonging to SPSS: March 1982

School Type / School Size*	Primary Schools		Secondary Schools		Primary Schools with Secondary Depts		TOTAL	
	N	% of total	N	% of total	N	% of total	N	% of total
1 (>600 pupils)	12	6	6	3	—	—	18	9
2 (301-600)	22	11	1	1	4	2	27	14
3 (101-300)	34	17	6	3	16	8	56	28
4 (36-100)	40	20	—	—	—	—	40	20
5 (<36)	58	29	—	—	—	—	58	29
TOTAL	166	83	13	7	20	10	199	100

* These categories are identical with the five designated classes of State Primary schools and primary schools with secondary departments.

Application to SPSS is open to all State schools in Queensland enrolling primary and secondary pupils. However, schools are admitted to the Scheme by the Advisory Committee only after consideration has been given to:

- the results of a questionnaire administered by the section and including a measurement of socio-economic level* and estimations of the degree of migrancy, aboriginality and isolation (the four designated areas of disadvantage); and

* The socio-economic level (SEL) is calculated by reference to the occupation of the major income earner associated with a random sample of students of the school. The SEL scale used by SPSS was developed by the Australian Schools Commission.

- the recommendation of the regional directorate. (In Queensland, government schooling is administered through nine regional offices at various locations throughout the State.)

A review of schools belonging to SPSS may be made once yearly by the Advisory Committee. Prior to 1981, the Schools Commission placed a limitation on the annual allowable turnover of schools on the Scheme. From 1981, the continuing membership of any school has been at the discretion of the Committee.

2.3 SPSS PROGRAMS

In carrying out the Scheme's objectives, the Advisory Committee is responsible for making decisions on the apportioning of approximately $2.5 million of SPSS funds per annum (1981-82 figures). This allocation is carried out through two different types of programs — programs initiated at the *systems* level and programs initiated at the *school* level. The two types of programs are discussed in detail below.

Systems initiated programs

The major programs initiated at the systems level by the SPSS Committee have been those concerned with the employment of general teacher aides. All special program schools have received teacher aide time additional to the standard Departmental allocation. It has not been necessary for SPSS schools to apply for this additional assistance.

In 1982, the additional aide formula for *primary schools* was 10 hours per week for the first 50 pupils; 15 hours per week for schools with 51-200 pupils; 30 hours per week for schools with 201-300 pupils; and 35 hours per week for schools with 301-400 pupils; and 15 hours per week for each additional 100 pupils. The amount of additional aide time for *high schools* and *secondary departments* attached to primary schools is determined by the Division of Secondary Education.

In the financial year 1981-82, approximately 60 per cent of the SPSS budget was allocated to employment of aides.

As well as additional aide programs, the SPSS Advisory Committee from time to time initiates programs that are designed to benefit all (or a substantial number of) schools within the Scheme. In 1980, for example, approximately $180,000 was spent on the upgrading of Special Program School Libraries; and approximately $60,000 contributed to the purchase of a video copier to be used by Production Services for copying Remote Area Video Programs (many SPSS schools are members of this scheme). Some aspects of this evaluation were also financed through a program initiated at the systems level.

School initiated programs

As well as receiving opportunities through systems initiated programs, each SPSS school is entitled to plan, write and submit applications for funding of specific projects pertaining to the individual school.

School initiated programs are the crux of the SPSS operation. These programs account for only 35-40 per cent of the annual budget, but over 85 per cent of the selection's time is spent on advising schools, processing applications and decision making in this area. For this reason, a considerable part of the evaluation focussed on issues surrounding school initiated programs.

Funding patterns of school initiated programs

One of the major tasks of Phase I was to describe in detail various facets of school initiated programs. It will be recalled from the Procedure section that an analysis was made of the 621 school initiated programs which were submitted by schools and processed by the Advisory Committee between January 1979 and March 1981. A summary of the results of this analysis begins here with a brief look at funding patterns over the two and a quarter year period under review. The analysis first of all showed that the programs had received a fairly high approval rating with only a minority of requests not being approved, that is, not receiving any funding at all.

- Completely approved programs — 65 per cent (N=405)
- Partly approved programs — 21 per cent (N=130)
- Not approved programs — 14 per cent (N= 86)

Table 2: Program funding amount by approval status: January 1979-March 1981

Program Approval Status / Program Funding Amount	Completely Approved Programs		Partly Approved Programs		Total Approved Programs		Not Approved Programs	
	N	Col %	N	Col %	N	Col %	N	Col %
$0-$500	33	8.1	12	9.2	45	8.4	12	14.0
$501-$1000	79	19.5	25	19.2	104	19.4	12	14.0
$1001-$2500	118	29.1	50	38.5	168	31.4	23	26.7
$2501-$5000	94	23.2	24	18.5	118	22.1	21	24.4
$5001-$10000	54	13.3	16	12.3	70	13.1	12	14.0
> $10000	27	6.7	3	2.3	30	5.6	6	7.0
TOTAL	405	100	130	100	535	100	86	100

Total Funding	$1423655	$330779	$1754434	$325565
Mean Program Value	$ 3515	$ 2544	$ 3279	$ 3970
Standard Deviation	$ 4366	$ 2572	$ 4024	$ 5424

Between January 1979 and March 1981, $1.75 million was allocated to school initiated programs. Table 2 gives a breakdown on their monetary value. It shows that an average program was worth $3,279 with a high degree of variation occurring between programs. The most frequently funded program amount was between $1,001-$2,500 and the majority of programs (71 per cent) were costed between $501-$5,000. It can also be seen that the requested values of the programs which were not approved appeared to follow a reasonably similar distribution pattern to those that were approved.

Two of the major variables considered during the evaluative component of the project were school type and school size. It is therefore of interest to look at various statistics on school initiated programs that centred upon these two variables. These statistics are presented in Tables 3(a) and 3(b) and are examined briefly by looking at each of the columns of the tables.

Table 3(a): Summary statistics on school type: January 1979-March 1981

Percentage Summaries / School Type	PERCENTAGE OF					Average Number of Programs Submitted Per School	Proportion of Programs Submitted Per Pupil	$ Per SPSS Pupil
	SPSS Schools N=222	SPSS Pupils N=45945	Programs Submitted N=621	Programs Funded N=535	Funds N=$1754434			
	Column 1	*Column 2*	*Column 3*	*Column 4*	*Column 5*	*Column 6*	*Column 7*	*Column 8*
Primary	81.5	65.7	70.4	72.9	73.1	2.4	.015	42.44
Secondary	6.8	19.6	16.1	14.8	16.1	6.7	.011	31.37
Primary/Secondary Departments	11.7	14.7	13.5	12.3	10.8	3.2	.012	28.20

Table 3(b): Summary statistics on school size: January 1979-March 1981

Percentage Summaries / School Size	PERCENTAGE OF					Average Number of Programs Submitted Per School	Proportion of Programs Submitted Per Pupil	$ Per SPSS Pupil
	SPSS Schools N=222	SPSS Pupils N=45945	Programs Submitted N=621	Programs Funded N=535	Funds N=$1754434			
	Column 1	*Column 2*	*Column 3*	*Column 4*	*Column 5*	*Column 6*	*Column 7*	*Column 8*
1	9.0	39.3	18.0	17.0	21.1	5.6	.008	20.56
2	14.0	26.3	23.8	24.1	25.7	4.8	.012	37.18
3	28.4	26.1	32.0	31.6	31.4	3.2	.018	45.87
4	20.3	8.0	14.5	15.3	12.8	2.0	.033	80.05
5	28.4	2.3	11.8	12.0	9.3	1.1	.069	155.60

Columns 1 and *2* on school and pupil data provide convenient reference points for an examination of the school initiated program data in the remaining columns. It can be seen that between January 1979 and March 1981, the majority of schools on the Scheme were primary

schools; a relatively large proportion of SPSS members were smaller schools; and proportionately higher school enrolments were experienced in secondary schools.

Columns 3 and *4* give the percentage of programs that were submitted and funded, and *Column 5* reports the percentage of funds that were allocated to the various school types and sizes. An examination of these three columns shows that the percentage of funds allocated to the various school types and sizes followed closely to the number of submitted programs. This finding is related in part to the overall high degree of program approval and illustrates the generally high overall relationship between funding success and submission activity.

Columns 6, 7 and *8* look at school initiated programs from a 'per school' or 'per pupil' basis. From *Column 6*, it can be observed that, on average, secondary schools and the larger schools were the most prolific writers. (The number of programs submitted per school ranged from zero (from 22 schools) to 15 programs (from one school).) *Column 7* is perhaps a more useful statistic in that it gives a proportional representation of the number of programs that were submitted per pupil. In doing so, the control of school size is afforded. The column shows that, on a per pupil basis, there was a fair similarity between the submission activity of the three school types, with primary schools being a little more active. As far as school size is concerned, however, there was a strong tendency for comparatively more programs to have been submitted per pupil, by smaller schools. Considering the resources available, then, smaller schools appeared to be fairly active compared to the larger schools.

Column 8 reflects the results presented in *Column 7*. Continuing with the 'per pupil' analysis, it shows that there was a reasonable similarity between two school types in the allocation of funding, with primary pupils benefitting the most. With school size, pupils of small size schools were 'financially better off' than their counterparts from larger schools. Indeed, these statistics reveal the importance of SPSS to those smaller schools on the Scheme.

Description of school initiated programs

As well as examining the various program distribution and funding patterns, the submissions were examined to describe the types of programs funded, the proposed foci of the programs, proposed beneficiaries and the anticipated outcomes.

Table 4 gives a categorisation of the major types of programs that were funded. It can be seen that there were three basic types of programs — equipment and materials, personnel and excursions. Equipment and materials was the most frequent funding type followed by personnel and excursions. One of the most interesting aspects of the table is the comparisons available between the percentage of programs funded and the percentage of funds allocated to each category. Of special interest is the comparatively high expenditure on capital equipment (30 per cent of the funds for 11 per cent of the programs) and supply teachers (11 per cent of funds for 7 per cent of programs).

Table 4: Types of funded school initiated programs: January 1979-March 1981

The funded program provided for . . .*	No. of Programs	Col %	$ Value	Col %	Mean Program $ Value	Standard Deviation $ Value
Equipment and Materials						
• Classroom Curriculum e.g. kits, schemes, books, music instruments, typewriters, craft equipment	60	11.2	119185	6.8	1986	1689
• Capital (non-expendable items) e.g. adventure playgrounds, sports facilities and school ground improvements	57	10.7	528859	30.1	9278	7901
• Audio Visual Reception e.g. film projectors, TV, VCR for media reception	37	6.9	78569	4.5	2123	3452
• Recreational/Room Improvements e.g. games, music instruments, art/craft material for recreational purposes plus ancillary room improvements (furniture, curtains, etc.)	29	5.4	58673	3.3	2023	1923
• Reprographics e.g. photocopiers, spirit duplicators, stencil cutters	20	3.7	39275	2.2	1963	2368
• Outdoors e.g. camping, sporting, canoeing, sailing	18	3.4	46084	2.6	2560	2644
• Classroom Curriculum plus Recreational/Room Improvements	17	3.2	29101	1.7	1711	1146
• Classroom Curriculum plus Audio Visual Reception	12	2.2	22430	1.3	1869	1220
Personnel						
• Teacher Aides	52	9.7	137560	7.8	2645	2433
• Supply Teachers	38	7.1	185521	10.6	4882	2422
• Tutors	13	2.4	27680	1.6	2129	1414
Excursions	97	18.1	180042	10.3	1856	1806
Other Combinations	85	15.9	301455	17.2	—	—
TOTAL	535	100	1754434	100	—	—

* This column reports only those categories which accounted for 10 or more programs. All smaller clusters are grouped together in the 'other combinations' category. Each category is discrete. Column percentages will therefore add to 100 (taking into account the slight rounding error).

** Approximately one-half of the funded excursions were one day trips, the remainder varied from 2-14 days.

How were the various program types funded? From discussions with SPSS personnel, it was found that the administrative structure for funding the various types is centralised in nature. Equipment and materials are purchased by the section itself, and aides and other personnel are paid in a similar fashion to other equivalent Departmental employees (but using SPSS votes). Only in the case of excursion programs is a *direct* grant paid to the school (for the purpose of paying for buses, tickets, etc.)

In what areas did school initiated programs focus? Most (86 per cent) of the funded proposals included at least one area of curriculum enrichment (e.g. language arts, science, music, physical education). However, this focus was not the exclusive concern of submission writers. Approximately three-quarters (77 per cent) of the funded programs included an extra curricula focus (e.g. sport, hobbies, social recreational activities) and there were also one-third (34 per cent) who proposed to give attention to community support, especially for the purpose of better communication between home and school. Finally, approximately 17 per cent of programs included a remedial focus, mainly in the reading/literacy area.

Since most programs used a curriculum based focus as a starting point, it is worthwhile to examine where the interest lay in this area, both in content and monetary terms. This examination may be afforded by reference to Table 5.

Table 5: Proposed curriculum foci of funded school initiated programs: January 1979-March 1981

The funded program proposed to *include* a focus on enrichment in . . .*	No of Programs	% of total	$ Value	% of total	Mean Program $ Value	Programs Standard Deviation $
General Curriculum	198	37.0	562662	32.1	2842	3193
Language Arts (Reading)	102	19.1	297725	17.0	2919	2664
Language Arts (Other)	96	17.9	301241	17.2	3138	3244
Mathematics	20	3.7	55662	3.2	2783	3468
Science	35	6.5	61607	3.5	1760	1196
Social Science	33	6.2	51760	3.0	1568	1331
Music	50	9.3	128048	7.3	2561	1974
Art/Craft	29	5.4	60512	3.4	2087	2987
Physical Education	71	13.3	493737	28.1	6954	7263
Health	3	0.6	16894	1.0	5631	8129
Other	28	5.2	109143	6.2	3898	5176
TOTAL	535	100	1754434	100	—	—

* For any one program, more than one of these curriculum categories may apply. The column percentages will therefore add to more than 100.

Looking first at the number of programs funded, it can be seen that the most frequent focus was one which proposed to provide curriculum enrichment in a variety of areas — general curriculum enrichment (37 per cent of programs). Other notable foci included language arts —

reading (19 per cent); language arts — other (18 per cent); and physical education (13 per cent).

Looking now at the allocation of funding to the various curriculum areas, it can be observed from Table 5 that the percentage of funding followed fairly closely to the percentage of programs funded in each area. The striking exception was physical education, a curriculum area that accounted for over a quarter (28 per cent) of the budget spent on school initiated programs over this period.

What types of programs did the various curriculum areas attract? When Tables 4 and 5 are combined, some notable funding focus and funding type combinations are revealed:

- of the 198 programs that included a *general curriculum* focus, 33 per cent funded excursions;
- of the 91 programs that included a *remedial* focus, 31 per cent funded supply teachers, and 23 per cent, teacher aides;
- of the 102 programs that included a *language arts — reading* focus, 31 per cent funded classroom curriculum equipment and materials, and 17 per cent, teacher aides;
- of the 96 programs that included a *language arts — other* focus, 24 per cent funded classroom curriculum equipment and materials, and 18 per cent, teacher aides; and
- of the 71 programs that included a *physical education* focus 56 per cent funded capital equipment (this explains the high budget allocation to physical education).

Next in this analysis of school initiated programs funded between January 1979 and March 1981, Table 6 presents the proposed major beneficiaries. It will be observed that students were uppermost in submission writers' minds. However, three other elements also figure in the submission writings: community, teachers and other schools.

Table 6: Proposed beneficiaries of funded school initiated programs: January 1979-March 1981

The funded program proposed to benefit . . . *	No of Programs	Col %	$ Value	Col %	Mean Program $ Value	Programs Standard Deviation
Students	246	46.0	646704	36.9	2629	3023
Students + Teachers	54	10.1	187319	10.7	3469	2693
Students + Local Community	157	29.3	592625	33.8	3775	5092
Students + Teachers + Local Community	38	7.1	157565	9.0	4146	4964
Students + Local Community + Other Schools	22	4.1	107202	6.1	4873	5462
Other Combinations	18	3.4	63019	3.6	3501	3508
TOTAL	535	100	1754434	100	—	—

* Each category in this column is discrete. Percentages will therefore add to 100 (taking into account the slight rounding error).

Finally in the examination of school initiated programs that were funded between January 1979 and March 1981, note was taken of what program outcomes were proposed. The analysis showed that the specified outcomes were closely related to the objectives of the Scheme (outlined in the Introduction). There was very little attempt to focus on any particular SPSS objective. Although the terminology was sometimes different, most of the programs proposed to fulfil at least three of the objectives outlined in the Introduction. The major exception was that only one-half of the programs appeared to propose an improvement in 'school openness' as an objective. The analysis of proposed outcomes is summarised below:

- 93 per cent of funded programs included a proposal to increase equality of access to achievement in curriculum area(s);
- 82 per cent included a proposal to increase equality of access to a wider variety of life experiences;
- 75 per cent included a proposal to improve schooling so that it will be enjoyable and meaningful in itself, not merely a preparation for later life; and
- 53 per cent included a proposal to improve school openness.

2.4 DESCRIPTION SUMMARY

In summarising Chapter 2, the following points may be made.

1. The SPSS Task Force consists of an Advisory Committee with representatives from a wide range of interested educational bodies, and a small administrative section responsible for making funding recommendations to the Committee, implementing the Committee's decisions and also for making advisory visits to SPSS schools throughout the State.
2. Application to SPSS is open to all State schools in Queensland enrolling primary and secondary pupils. Schools are admitted to the Scheme according to the results of a questionnaire which estimates the degree of disadvantage; and also according to the recommendation of the regional directorate.
3. In March 1982, 199 schools belonged to the Scheme which accounted for approximately 17 per cent of Queensland government schools. These schools enrolled approximately 12 per cent of all State primary and secondary pupils.
4. The Advisory Committee allocates approximately $2.5 million per annum (1981-82 figures) through programs initiated at the systems level and programs initiated at the school level.
5. Systems initiated programs account for 60-65 per cent of the annual budget of which most has been spent on the allocation of additional aide time for all SPSS schools.
6. School initiated programs account for only 35-40 per cent of the annual budget but over 85 per cent of the section's time is spent on advising schools, processing applications and decision making in this area. School initiated programs are the crux of the Scheme.
7. In an analysis of school initiated program submissions that were considered by the Advisory Committee between January 1979 and March 1981, the following funding patterns were established.
   - Submissions received a fairly high approval rating with only a minority of requests (14 per cent) not being approved. There was therefore a high relationship between the amount of funding for a school and the degree of submission activity.
   - The mean approved program value was $3,279 with seven-tenths of programs valued between $500 and $5,000.

- On average, secondary schools and larger schools were the most prolific submission writers with seven programs each being submitted by them. In comparison, two programs each were submitted by primary schools and three each for primary schools with secondary departments. The number of programs submitted per school varied from zero to 15.
- On a 'per pupil' basis, there was a fair similarity between the submission activity of the three schools with primary schools being a little more active. On a per pupil basis also, smaller schools were more active than larger schools. The per pupil funding amounts generally reflected these findings.

8. In an analysis of school initiated program submissions that were considered by the Advisory Committee between January 1979 and March 1981, the following descriptive information was ascertained.
   - The most frequent type of program centred upon the purchase of equipment and materials. Less frequent programs involved the employing of additional personnel and the conducting of excursions.
   - The majority of programs proposed to focus on both curriculum enrichment and extra curricula activities. Less frequent foci were community support and remedial activities. The most frequent curriculum foci were general curriculum (programs covering a variety of areas), language arts and physical education.
   - The most frequently proposed beneficiaries of the programs were students, followed by members of the local community.
   - Most programs proposed to fulfil three of the four objectives of the Scheme. The exception was the objective of 'school openness'. Only one-half of the programs proposed to fulfil this objective.

3. EVALUATION OF THE SCHEME'S ORGANISATIONAL REQUIREMENTS AND PROCEDURES

This chapter concentrates on the organisational aspects of the Scheme, especially as they affect the schools themselves.

In looking at these aspects, much of the chapter (especially sections 3.3-3.9) focuses on the requirements and procedures associated with school initiated programs. This is because the majority of the Scheme's operational practices centre upon this type of program (the crux of the Scheme). For SPSS schools also, the heart of their personal involvement lies with school initiated programs.

Throughout the chapter, reference is made, where applicable, to the Advisory Committee's suggestions laid down in the *Special Program Schools Guidelines* which is the procedural guide issued to SPSS schools.

For convenience and ease of understanding, the format of the chapter is sequential in that it proceeds from those organisational aspects associated with 'entering the Scheme' to those associated with 'exiting from it'. At the end of the chapter, the findings are discussed, conclusions drawn and recommendations made.

The chapter is organised under the following headings:

- opinions on the eligibility of schools to enter the Scheme;
- beginning involvement in the Scheme;
- program selection methods employed by schools;
- ways in which schools prepare written submissions;
- opinions on the submission writing format;
- opinions on the procedures for submitting and processing programs;
- opinions on the procedure for communicating to schools the results or progress of the Committee's deliberations;
- opinions on the procedure for supplying schools with their programs;
- ways in which programs are implemented and evaluated;
- opinions on the eligibility of present schools to remain on the Scheme; and
- discussion, conclusions and recommendations.

3.1 OPINIONS ON THE ELIGIBILITY OF SCHOOLS TO ENTER THE SCHEME

As stated previously, schools are admitted to the Scheme by the SPSS Advisory Committee after consideration has been given both to the results of a questionnaire administered by the section and the recommendations of the regional directorate. Principals were asked their opinions on the procedures required for entry to the Scheme.

In general, principals were unaware of the exact nature of the regional directorate's recommendations and therefore were not able to offer an opinion concerning this aspect. Several principals commented that a personal visit to a school was of great importance in considering eligibility but most discussions centred upon the questionnaire used by SPSS to estimate 'disadvantage'.

Principals in 12 schools had recent experience in completing the eligibility questionnaire and therefore were qualified to offer an opinion. In their responses, it was found that 10 of the 12 principals felt that the questionnaire had allowed them to give a fairly accurate and true picture of their school's disadvantaged situation. For example:

> . . . Fairly accurate. It gave quite a bit of scope for writing about the special needs of the school and the community.

In reporting these general positive opinions, it is important to note two major points.

First, there is a question mark over interpretation of the term 'accurate'. To explain further, there were a few principals who tended to associate the 'accuracy' of the questionnaire with the fact that they had been successful in entering the Scheme. For example, one principal stated, ' In our case, the questionnaire was very favourable to our school — a most undesirable location coupled with low SEL in the community '. It is therefore conjectural whether or not principals would have found the questionnaire 'accurate' if they had been unsuccessful in entering the Scheme. By way of elaboration, another principal had actually experienced an unsuccessful attempt a few years previously. He commented, ' That scale was way out as far as we were concerned — we queried the scale '. A few principals also commented that while they felt the questionnaire had been an accurate indication of the school's disadvantage, they were only guessing because they had no yardstick to measure the ratings of other schools. One of these principals stated, ' I wouldn't argue with the accuracy of the thing, but I suppose you'd have to look at the figures on the whole thing for Queensland '. There is, then, a difficulty over the term 'accuracy'.

The second point to note is that while most principals felt that the questionnaire had been 'accurate', most commented on at least one real or potential problem with the questionnaire. These problems included the dependency of the questionnaire on the principal's honesty in completing it; difficulties involved in obtaining accurate information about parents' occupations; and problems associated with interpreting the meaning of occupations listed on the SEL scale. The following quotes exemplify these three areas of difficulty.

First, the honesty factor:

> There doesn't seem to be any check. They take our word for it that there is this number of families. It's based on the honesty of the principal.

Next, the difficulties in obtaining accurate information about a parent's occupation for use in completing the SEL scale:

> I can see a difficulty in a larger school. Some of the enrolment registers are inaccurate. Some put down the occupation of the person who enrolled the children, not the breadwinner's occupation.

Finally, problems involved in interpreting the occupations listed on the SEL scale. A common response in this area was similar to:

> I couldn't understand where the levels came from — where the graziers and professional people are classed together. I know the graziers here are having a bit of a hard time . . . On the other hand, labourers were fairly low down and yet mining is really booming. I was just a little confused.

In discussing the latter problem, it was found that several principals had 'adjusted' the scale a little to fit in with what was felt to be the real school situation.

Summary

In summarising Section 3.1, the following points may be noted.

1. Most principals felt that the questionnaire required to be completed for entry to the Scheme, was an accurate representation of their school's disadvantage. It is difficult, however, to determine the meaning of the term 'accurate', in view of the fact that the questionnaire was one of the avenues by which schools had successfully entered the Scheme.
2. Most principals spoke of at least one real or potential problem with the eligibility questionnaire. These problems included the dependency of the questionnaire on the principal's honesty in completing it; difficulties involved in obtaining accurate information about parents' occupations; and problems associated with interpreting the meaning of occupations listed on the SEL scale.

3.2 BEGINNING INVOLVEMENT IN THE SCHEME

An important prerequisite to a school fulfilling the Scheme's requirements is a knowledge of those requirements. How did principals of SPSS schools get to know about the Scheme and how did teachers and community become involved?

Principals

In response to questions about how they got to know about the Scheme, principals in six of the 24 schools (one-quarter) answered that they had been involved in SPSS at a previous school. In a further 13 of the schools (one-half), principals had not been involved with the Scheme before arriving at their present school, but had ' got to know a little ' about its existence through various sources which included ' seminars ', ' being located close to a special program school ', ' discussions at principals' meetings ' and ' reading about the Scheme in EOG '. Principals from the remaining one-quarter of schools really only got to know about the Scheme after being transferred to their present school. These latter principals were from either secondary schools or one-teacher primary schools (Class 5).

The major source of current information available to principals in most of the visited schools was the school's 'disadvantaged school' or SPSS file. This file consisted mainly of the "green book" (the *Special Program Schools Guidelines**) and copies of previous school initiated program submissions with accompanying correspondence. The *Guidelines* was supplied by the SPSS Committee to all schools on the Scheme (indeed only in one school did the principal appear not to have a copy). This document appeared to be the only uniform information available across schools. The second source, copies of previous program submissions, were available in most (but not all) school files by virtue of the school's prior involvement in the Scheme.

In addition to the above, principals in approximately one-half of the schools had obtained other information within the school from either resident or visiting personnel. Prominent persons were teaching staff and SPSS field officers. In approximately one-half of the schools also, principals reported that they had taken the initiative by contacting personnel outside the school. Prominent persons were other principals and SPSS field officers.

Were these various information sources sufficient in enabling principals (and schools) to become successfully involved in the Scheme, especially in regard to their main concern, school initiated programs? In examining this question, it may be concluded that irrespective of the sources of information about SPSS at a school's disposal, there appeared to be sufficient information available to at least enable most schools to have submissions prepared and sent to the SPSS Committee.

While this is so, the evaluation also revealed that, for some principals, there were both real and potential difficulties associated with getting to know the Scheme.

The major difficulties were expressed by principals in Class 5 one-teacher schools. For example, two of the six Class 5 principals in the sample indicated that they were not sufficiently confident yet to set about the task of beginning work on a submission. This difficulty may be exemplified by reporting the comments of a Class 5 principal who had only been in the position for a few months:

> Before I started, I had a couple of days out here with (the previous principal) and he tried to fill me in on the scheme, but it was very confusing . . . I really have no idea . . . All I got was the fact that they got extra aide time and they sort of got extra money to use for bus fares (on excursions) . . . But then, we were talking about so many things which were going on at the school.

Although this response is an exceptional one, it does point to the problems facing some principals entering both the Scheme and principalships for the first time. There were some principals of smaller schools who indicated they had learnt a little about the Scheme through a session at an induction program for Class 5 principals. It was clear, however, that not all new principals had attended (or remembered attending) such an information session. Indeed, from our discussions with Class 5 principals, it became obvious that the SPSS was only one of the many new areas with which new principals had to come to grips, and at the same time, still fulfilling their primary role of teaching. It is interesting to note that most principals of smaller schools tended to see their first year as a settling in period, with the result that special program submissions were delayed until later during their term of office at the school. This pattern of involvement may be one

* The *Special Program Schools Guidelines* contains the following table of contents: the Special Program Schools Scheme team; the Advisory Committee; what's it all about; what it means to your school; guidelines for a needs assessment; the submission — how to go about it; instructions to principal and/or co-ordinating committee; what happens to your submission; what programs can be funded; who can help you; and evaluation — the need for feedback.

explanation why, in the Phase I findings, it was revealed that over a two and a quarter year period, only 72 programs were submitted by the 63 Class 5 primary schools on the Scheme.

A second area of concern is associated with the principals of secondary schools. It was stated earlier that, along with some Class 5 primary principals, there were several principals from secondary schools who indicated that their knowledge of the Scheme really began with the transfer to their present school. The principals' lack of prior knowledge is one aspect that could affect the degree of involvement of some secondary schools on the Scheme. Of course, in the absence of more concrete evidence, this area of concern remains a potential rather than a real one. However, it is noted here because it could have some bearing on the ways in which secondary teachers become involved in the Scheme (see below).

Teachers and Community

The evaluation revealed that there was a tendency for teachers and community in primary and secondary schools to become involved in SPSS through different avenues.

The most frequent way in which *primary teachers* and *community people* became involved was through the principal. For example, in 10 (approximately three-fifths) of the 16 primary interviews, teachers and community people were informed that the school was "on the Scheme" by the principal, usually during a staff meeting or a P & C meeting.

For *secondary teachers*, the importance of the principal as a stimulus appeared to be less obvious. For example, the most frequent path to involvement (expressed in seven (one-third) of the 21 secondary teacher interviews) was for the teacher to approach the administration with projects in mind and to be informed of the existence of SPSS as a possible avenue for funding.

Other less frequent ways in which teachers (both primary and secondary) became involved in the Scheme were through meetings with SPSS personnel, through prior introduction at another school or through implementing existing programs at the school.

How adequate were the methods by which teachers and community became involved? If any comment is warranted concerning this question, perhaps it is the way in which the knowledge of the Scheme appeared to be transmitted to many secondary teachers. It has already been stated that the role of the principal in communicating information about the Scheme to secondary teachers was less obvious than in the primary area. This finding raises the question of how the absence of a central information source (principals) affects potential involvement. While the SPSS Committee should be encouraged by the initiative shown by some secondary teachers in becoming involved in the Scheme, it is questionable on the surface anyway, whether or not less formal procedures allow for the whole school to get to know about the Scheme and consequently to have the opportunity to become involved. It is impossible to draw any definite conclusions on this point because the design of this phase of the evaluation did not extend to interviews with teachers who were not involved in the Scheme. Nor was any data on secondary teacher involvement collected in Phase I. It will be seen, however, that the difference between primary and secondary teachers in the way they tend to become involved in the Scheme, does have a bearing on the way programs are generated.

Summary

In summarising Section 3.2, the following points may be noted.

1. Principals in approximately three-quarters of the schools had obtained either knowledge or experience with the Scheme before arriving at their present school. Principals from the

remaining one-quarter of schools really only got to know about the Scheme after being transferred to their present school. These latter principals were from either secondary schools or one-teacher primary schools (Class 5).

2. The major source of information available to principals in most schools was the relevant school file which usually contained the *Special Program Schools Guidelines* and examples of previous submissions. Other sources included teaching staff, other principals and SPSS field officers. The only uniform information across schools appeared to be the *Guidelines*.
3. There was a tendency for teachers and community in primary and secondary schools to become involved in SPSS through different avenues. In *primary schools*, teachers and community representatives were more likely to become involved through the stimulus of the principal. In *secondary schools*, the importance of the principal was less obvious, with the most frequent stimulus appearing to be teachers' desire to commence a ' pet project '. Other ways in which primary and secondary teachers became involved were through meetings with SPSS personnel, prior introduction at another school and through implementing existing programs.
4. Irrespective of the sources of information about SPSS at a school's disposal, there appeared to be sufficient information available to at least enable most schools to have submissions prepared and sent to the SPSS Committee.
5. The unique problems faced by new Class 5 primary principals probably affect their degree of knowledge of and involvement in the Scheme.
6. It is possible that the lack of knowledge of some secondary principals concerning the Scheme, and the indirect method by which secondary teachers are informed of it, may affect the degree of involvement of some secondary school personnel in the Scheme.

3.3 PROGRAM SELECTION METHODS EMPLOYED BY SCHOOLS

Before reporting the program selection methods used by schools, consideration should be given to the Committee's suggestions on this topic. These suggestions can be found in Section V of the *Special Program Schools Guidelines* and may be summarised as follows.

(i) A needs assessment should be carried out ' to determine the realistic description of needs in the school and community that can be acted upon through funds, from the Special Program Schools Scheme '.

(ii) The needs assessment should be carried out by a committee including ' the principal, some staff, parents, key personnel in the community and selected children '.

(iii) The needs assessment is to form ' the basis of any master plan designed to remedy the weaknesses discovered '. It is ' intended that the information should be a school record which will provide staff and community both now and in the future with the statistical data they need '.

(iv) ' A priority list of needs and possible ways to meet them should be established and their committees formed to work on specific programs which can be presented as submissions to the Special Program Schools Scheme. '

In view of the above suggestions, an attempt was made to discover what selection processes were used by schools in practice. Principals were asked how the school arrived at the types of programs for which they planned to apply. In the discussions that followed, it was found that in approximately one-third of the schools, there was some form of 'regular' procedure which was utilised in selecting programs. These schools consisted mainly of larger primary schools and primary schools with secondary departments (Class 2 and 3). In the remaining two-thirds of schools, programs tended to be selected on an 'apply as the need arises' basis. These schools

consisted mainly of secondary schools and smaller primary schools (Class 4 or 5). The two program selection approaches are described in more detail below.

'Regular' procedures

In nine of the 24 schools (approximately one-third), principals spoke of some form of 'regular' needs assessment procedure. As reported above, these schools consisted mainly of larger primary schools and primary schools with secondary departments (Class 2 and 3). In these schools, there was a listing of needs and a setting forth of priorities. The needs assessment methods varied from surveys to formal and informal discussions with interested parties. The form of these needs assessments was different from that suggested in the *Guidelines*.

Perhaps the biggest departure from the *Guidelines* was the finding that in only four of these schools did there appear to be any real community involvement in the assessment of needs. Two of the remaining schools confined their discussion of needs to the school milieu, and only after this approached the P & C for what amounts to ratification. The final three schools appeared to carry out their needs assessment totally within the school confines.

As well as limited community involvement, few school children appeared to be involved in the program selection process, as suggested in the *Guidelines*. Indeed, in the interviews with principals, it became clear that school staff were the central actors in needs assessment.

This conclusion was supported in the teacher interviews. For example, in 15 (seven-tenths) of the 21 interviews that were held with primary and secondary teachers in these schools, teachers spoke of school personnel being responsible for the discussion and selection of programs in which they were involved. Only in six primary school interviews did teachers answer that they had experienced the holding of a community meeting for the purpose of choosing programs.

The 'apply as the need arises' procedure

In 15 of the 24 schools (approximately two-thirds), the procedure for selecting suitable programs for possible funding could best be described as an 'apply as the need arises' one. As previously reported, these schools consisted mainly of secondary schools and smaller primary schools (Class 4 or 5).

In most of these schools, the origin of the 'need' came from an individual or group within the school setting. Once again, there was little or no community involvement in program selection. In the *smaller primary schools* (Class 4 or 5), the idea usually originated with the principal and this was then followed by consultation and discussion with the P & C. In the *secondary schools*, the community did not appear to be involved. Both principals and teachers reported that the initial impetus was more likely to come from teachers (or subject masters) interested in obtaining something for their own departments. For example, of the 16 teacher interviews conducted in these secondary schools, 10 of the interviews supplied the information that the proposed programs had been the teachers' idea. Other teachers reported a joint principal-teacher effort and on those occasions where more than one need had arisen in the school at any one time, especially in larger schools, priorities had been set by various committees of the school (subject masters, senate, etc.) Where this had occurred, however, it appeared to be more of a response to a consideration of arisen needs presented by school personnel, rather than an attempt to some formalised school needs assessment as presented in the previous section.

Summary

To summarise Section 3.3, the following points may be noted.

1. There was a strong leaning towards an 'apply as the need arises' selection process rather than a more formalised needs assessment as suggested in the *Special Program Schools Guidelines*.
2. The preference for either approach appeared to be aligned to school type. It was seen that, with little exception, most larger primary schools and primary schools with secondary departments attempted some form of needs assessment while secondary schools and smaller primary schools tended to apply as the need arose.
3. It was found that, whatever approach was used, the influence of school administrative or teaching personnel in program choice was paramount. The involvement of school children and the community appeared to be minimal.

3.4 WAYS IN WHICH SCHOOLS PREPARE WRITTEN SUBMISSIONS

In the previous section, a description was made of how schools arrive at the types of programs for which they planned to apply. This present section describes the next stage and begins by turning once again to the *Special Program Schools Guidelines*, in particular, Section VI, entitled ' The Submission — How to Go About It '.

In Section VI, the following information is imparted:

When needs have been assessed and priorities of attack determined, the next steps are:

1. formation of a proposal committee, representative of school and community;
2. development of a specific program aimed at alleviating the perceived areas of need; and
3. preparation of your submission adhering to the (following) submission format. (page 11)

To investigate these suggestions, principals and teachers were asked questions about who were the major contributors in submission writing and how these submissions were written. These two aspects are reported separately.

The major contributors to submission writing

From interviews with principals and teachers, it was found that the major contributors were usually one or two interested school personnel who were either excited by the prospects of funding or who were prepared to put the time and effort into submissions. Only in four of the 25 schools did it appear that the development and preparation of a submission was carried out by a 'proposal committee representative of school and community'. In these four schools, the staff were still the dominant partners.

In general, the main contributors to submission writing in *secondary schools* and *secondary departments* were staff teachers or subject masters with guidance where necessary from the administration.

In the *smaller primary schools* (Class 4 and 5), it was mainly the principal who had (or planned to have) the dominant hand in the development and preparation of submissions. Only in one of these 10 schools was there a major contribution from another source — the staff teacher in a Class 4 school. In a few cases, there was also minor assistance from another party. For example, one enterprising principal reported that submission maps ' were done by the children as part of mapping skills in social studies '.

Finally, in the *larger primary schools* (Class 2 and 3), it was the principal who appeared to have overall responsibility for the preparation of submissions. While this is so, it was not always his 'exclusive' task. For example, in five of the sixteen primary school interviews, teachers reported that they had written submissions. In three of the schools, there were also examples of community involvement in submission writing, although, in these cases, the principal still appeared to be the major contributor.

Details on submission writing

As reported earlier, one of the requirements of the *Guidelines* is the preparation of a submission according to a particular format. In discussion with principals and teachers, it was reported that, in general, all submissions were prepared more or less according to this required format. The time which submissions took to prepare varied greatly from a couple of hours writing time to many months of preparation. Most principals and teachers reported that this writing was usually carried out ' after school ', ' out of school time ' or ' at home '. A few principals and teachers answered ' both during school time and after school ' but no one had been able to write the submission completely during school time.

Principals and teachers also spoke of the advice that they had received in planning their programs. Not surprisingly, predominant sources of advice were those available in the school, especially the *Special Program Schools Guidelines* and examples of previous submissions. Outside sources of advice were also discussed. Principals in seven of the 24 schools spoke of their school having received outside advice and in approximately one-half of the teachers' interviews, it was revealed that teachers had also received outside advice. In this respect, secondary teachers tended to ascertain outside advice more than primary teachers, probably a function of their greater involvement in submission writing. Some of the mentioned sources for advice included other principals, district inspectors, community representatives and special program schools personnel. With little exception, the general impression was that the advice obtained had been beneficial and was fairly readily available if principals or teachers sought it. Of special interest, perhaps, is the finding that those principals and teachers who had initiated contact with SPSS were generally pleased with the response they received. A small number reported that they had changed their programs on the basis of advice from SPSS officers.

Summary

To summarise Section 3.4, the following points may be noted.

1. Only in a minority of schools was the development and preparation of a school initiated submission carried out by a 'proposal committee representative of school and community' as suggested in the *Guidelines*.
2. The major contributors to submission writing appeared to be school administrative or teaching personnel — teachers or subject masters in secondary schools and secondary departments; principals in smaller primary schools; and principals and teachers in larger primary schools.
3. Principals and teachers reported that they endeavoured to prepare their submissions as close as possible to the required format as set out in the *Guidelines*.
4. The time which submissions took to write varied greatly. Submission development and preparation appeared to be a mostly part-time, out of school activity.
5. In preparing the written submissions, the predominant sources of advice were the *Special Program Schools Guidelines* and examples of previous submissions. Approximately one-third of principals and one-half of teachers had benefited also from receiving outside advice from various sources.

3.5 OPINIONS ON THE SUBMISSION WRITING FORMAT

Section VI of the *Special Program Schools Guidelines* details the required format for writing submissions. The basic procedure requires the writer to 'tell his/her own story' within a fairly structured format. The format for 'new' submissions may be summarised as follows.*

PART A — SCHOOL INFORMATION

This section asks for basic school and program identification data (program title, school name, address, etc.)

PART B — BACKGROUND

Within the context of the proposed program, writers are asked to detail both the positive and negative aspects of the school and community, and to define the program's objectives and long-term aims.

PART C — THE PROPOSED PROGRAM

Here the writer states how the school intends to achieve the aims and objectives of the program.

PART D — EVALUATION

The proposed methods for evaluating the program are set out.

PART E — BUDGET

A program budget is provided according to a prescribed format.

PART F — COMMITTEE

Finally, this section lists the names and signatures of the committee indicating their connection with the school.

Both principals and teachers were asked about the appropriateness of the submission writing format. Due to longer interviews with principals, questions were also asked of them concerning whether or not they wanted changes to the present format or alternatively, desired a different format. Discussions surrounding these issues are reported separately below.

Appropriateness of the submission writing format

Principals in 18 schools had been involved in submission writing directly and therefore were qualified to discuss this topic. In four of the 18 schools (approximately one-fifth), principals felt that the format was ' fair enough ' or ' appropriate ' mainly because they had experienced ' no real hassles ' with it. At the other end of the scale, there were three principals who disliked the format because of its lack of relevance to reality and its time consuming nature. As one of these principals put it: ' It's a load upon a load. If the preparation of a submission becomes a major job, it's a major job on top of a major job. '

Most other principals approached the question of appropriateness from a different angle. There appeared to be a common theme running through most of the discussions, namely, an awareness of the accountable nature of school based needs programs. Most principals felt, that while submission

* The format for continuing programs is an adaptation of this format.

writing was a lengthy process, a format which facilitated accountability was probably necessary. This accountability worked in two ways. The submitter had to show that he/she was knowledgeable about the proposed program, and the SPSS had to know the reasons for the request. In either of these two respects, the present required format was deemed by most principals to be appropriate. This is exemplified by the following two quotes:

> The submitter has to have the basic reason for the program all thought out, otherwise I can't see the thing doing a great deal of good. I think that the person has to justify it to themselves, the community and the special program schools.

> I think that it's fair enough simply because people assessing the program really do have to have some data to work with . . .

In summary, then, there were several principals who felt that the format was appropriate because they personally had experienced no hassles with it. Others disliked it because of its demanding nature. Most principals, however, sometimes begrudgingly, drew attention to the necessary accountable nature of the submission writing format.

Turning now to the opinions of teachers, in 26 of the 37 interviews, teachers answered that they had been involved in submission writing directly. In 24 of them, an opinion was offered.

From seven of the 24 interviews (three-tenths) came the response that teachers felt the format had been generally ' appropriate ', ' reasonable ' or ' well put together '. However, in one of these interviews, it was felt that the format was too long, and in a further two, difficulties had been experienced in writing the submission. Teachers in the remaining 17 interviews also spoke in terms of either the demanding duration of submission writing or of the various difficulties associated with it (or both). On this latter point, one particular difficulty experienced especially by teachers in country areas, was the obtaining of firm quotes for the budget section. In discussing difficulties such as this one, not all teachers blamed the submission format. A few teachers spoke of their own inexperience in submission writing.

The two areas of concern, 'length' and 'difficulty', are exemplified by the two quotes below:

> Just too demanding. Normal teaching duties that you undertake are never completed so that by the time you've got that form to fill in and justify everything, it would have been hours and hours of work.

> I started off by writing to all the different sources for information, prices, etc. It was a big task and I had to wait months and months.

An interesting point of difference between the responses of principals and teachers was the less emphasis given by teachers to the accountable nature of submission writing. Only three teachers drew attention to this aspect.

In summary, the general impression gained about the adequacy of the format for teachers was that if writers were reasonably keen, they could certainly manage. However, there were areas of concern for the majority which centred upon the time consuming or difficult nature of the task.

Returning now to the interviews with principals, there was time to discuss the submission writing format more fully with them, due to the greater time allotment. Already, it has been reported that principals were aware of the accountability of school based programs. But did they think there was an easier and more effective way to request ' accountable ' funding? In discussions surrounding this topic, it was found that there were principals who felt that there could be changes to the present format and still others who felt that an alternative format was more desirable. These two aspects are now discussed consecutively.

Suggested changes to present format

Looking first at possible changes to the *present* format, the major contention was the apparent unnecessary detail and duplication in some aspects of submission writing. In approximately one-half of the interviews, this view was expressed. Two major sources of repetition were reported again and again during the Phase II visits. Some principals questioned the need to submit ' background information ' for each program and others were concerned about the apparent unnecessary duplication in 'continuing' programs. The exemplary quotes below explain these aspects:

> The factors that put you on the special program schools list shouldn't have to be repeated in your submission — *the background information* — they should have that, otherwise you wouldn't be on the list. Also, for every submission you're going to repeat, the information doesn't basically change. To that end, it's a bit of a waste.

> When you submit a *continuing* program you should be able to refer to other programs; it shouldn't need to be in such detail unless it's a great change to the program — and this would be a new program.

As well as receiving suggestions for changes to the present submission writing format, a concern was expressed by several principals (four in all) who felt that while the written submission was adequate in itself, it should be used in conjunction with some form of personal appraisal. To quote one principal, ' The written word sometimes gains approval by the quality of the written word rather than the quality of what it's going to bring about in the school '. These principals felt that if it was possible, part of the appraisal process should involve visits to the school by special program schools personnel. This is additional to the present advisory role of section personnel.

Suggested alternative formats

As well as discussing possible changes to the *present* format, principals were asked whether or not there was any other format which they would prefer. In approximately one-third of the interviews (seven out of 18), principals spoke of an alternative format. These seven alternatives are as follows.

Two principals felt that the detail required for submissions should be related to the dollar value of the program that is being requested. This idea is exemplified in the following quote:

> Perhaps you could have a cut off point, say, up to $1,500, a lay it on the line, 'can I have the money for this?' I'd like the idea of a checklist here. Then, $1,500 on, you're starting to talk money. In this case, I'd like to write my own story.

Another two principals were also interested in an intermediate step, though not aligned to any dollar value. They felt that when applying for a program, a smaller submission should be considered

by the Committee initially, and if successful, a full submission could then be developed. The principals' major motivating factor was their concern that some of their staff teachers had been discouraged by not receiving funding approval after having spent a long time preparing their submissions. The purpose of the smaller initial submission then was to act as a 'disappointment buffer'. Below is the comment of one of these principals.

> I'd like to see a preliminary questionnaire asking the very basic things. They could say 'this has a chance — we want a detailed submission now' or 'this one doesn't have a chance of funding'. So the teacher wouldn't waste his time. I don't think that teachers mind writing submissions provided they feel they're going to be successful.

A further two principals preferred a non-structured letter format whereby they'd be able to put in the details ' that they wanted '. Finally, and at the other end of the spectrum, a seventh principal felt that there should be a more structured 'scientific' approach. He stated:

> I'd like to look at five steps. 1. Problem Identification. 2. Mode of Attack. 3. Data Collation. 4. Compiling of Material. 5. Evaluation. This scientific method would reduce the time necessary, for the formulation of submissions at the moment.

In examining these suggested alternatives above, and the suggested changes in the previous section, it will be noted that, with little exception, there does not appear to be any definite movement away from some style of *narrative* format. Indeed, the narrative style appeared to be fairly well accepted. To test this hypothesis, the following question was asked directly: ' Would you prefer some form of checklist format? ' In general, principals either answered ' no ' or felt that was ' not feasible '. Indeed, only two principals answered that they would prefer a checklist format ' if it was feasible '.

Below are some examples of the majority response:

> I still prefer to write a story because some of the things cannot be isolated in checklist form.

> No, I would prefer an open-ended situation.

> I don't like checklists. How are you going to devise a checklist to cover, say, personnel, excursions, or sailing projects. This (present format) allows them to be put in there.

Summary

To summarise Section 3.5, the following points may be noted.

1. A minority of principals and teachers felt that the submission writing format was ' appropriate ' because they liked it or had experienced little difficulty with it.
2. The majority of principals felt that the format was lengthy but appropriate, not so much for personal reasons, but because school needs based programs were ' accountable '. Only a minority of teachers expressed a similar view.
3. The majority of teachers spoke of the ' appropriateness ' of the format in terms of either the time consuming and demanding nature of the task or of various mechanical difficulties they had experienced (or both).

. . . And in more lengthy discussions with principals —

4. In approximately one-half of the interviews, principals answered that they felt the format should be streamlined to reduce what was felt to be ' unnecessary repetition in some sections '.

5. Principals in approximately one-third of the interviews felt that some form of alternative format was required. Several suggestions were made and reported.
6. Most principals preferred some form of *narrative* submission rather than a checklist style treatment.

3.6 OPINIONS ON THE PROCEDURES ADOPTED FOR SUBMITTING AND PROCESSING PROGRAMS

In this section, the submitting and processing procedures will be treated separately.

Submitting

In Section VII of the *Special Program Schools Guidelines*, instructions for submitting programs are set down. The *Guidelines* states:

> A minimum of four (4) copies of a submission are required for the following distributions:
>
> One (1) copy to be filed at the school for record and future reference.
> Three (3) copies to be sent to the relevant Regional Director and marked as follows –
> Original — to the Co-ordinator
> Duplicate — to the Co-ordinator
> Triplicate — for Regional Office file
>
> Each copy of the submission should be contained in a manila folder with name of school, title of submission and date of lodgement marked on the front. (page 15)

Principals in 19 schools had been involved in submitting programs. An analysis of the responses showed that 11 of the 19 principals (three-fifths) felt that the procedure was ' fair enough ' or ' no troubles '. In fact, for most of these principals, the submitting procedure appeared to be a non-issue requiring no further comment. However, four of these principals did comment by stating that they were in favour of the regional directorate receiving the submissions. For example, one of the principals answered:

> I think that regional office should have some knowledge of what's going on. They have an understanding of the town — the need to be on the program..

Principals in the remaining eight of the 19 schools made comments which questioned or suggested improvements to the submitting procedure. One principal wanted a further copy to go to the district inspector, while another felt that the inspector should be the processor of all submissions. A third principal felt that the requirement of submitting a program several months in advance made it difficult to develop. Of the remaining five principals in this group of eight, it is interesting to note that the major comment centred upon their questioning the necessity of sending submissions to Regional Office. The general direction of their comments was that fewer submission processors would probably cause less delay. One of these principals with personal experience on the matter, answered:

> In theory, the principle is okay, but we find it goes to Regional Office. It sits on somebody's table there for a considerable number of weeks and then it goes to the Special Program Schools people.

This comment leads us to a discussion of opinions concerning the processing of submissions.

Processing

In Section VIII, the *Guidelines* outlines 'what happens to your submission'. Those 'happenings' relevant to this discussion are reprinted below:

1. Your submission is first received by Regional Office. The Regional Director and District Inspector will place their comments on the proposal.
2. Original and duplicate copies, with the comments attached, are then forwarded to the Co-ordinator of the Special Program Schools Scheme.
3. The submission is then prepared by the Executive staff for presentation at the Advisory Committee meeting. If the submission deals with a field where specialists are available, e.g. music, art, physical education, their advice is sought before the submission is presented to the Advisory Committee. This may mean that additional information is sought from the school at this time. (page 17)

In ascertaining opinions on these processing procedures, discussions with principals surrounded two major aspects:

(i) the length of submission processing; and
(ii) communication between school and SPSS during and at the completion of processing.

This section concentrates only on the first aspect because the second aspect will be considered fully in Section 3.7.

Principals in 17 schools had experience in taking programs from the submission to implementation stages. Eleven of these principals (approximately two-thirds) reported delays in the processing of one or more of their programs. These delays varied from many months to more than a year. Some principals spoke of the reasons for the delays, including problems with the regional office (previously mentioned); the Works Department (in obtaining approval for sites, electrical installations, etc.); the small size of the SPSS section; and delays caused by queries about the submission itself. As to whether these delays had affected the implementation of programs, five principals expressed concern. These concerns centred upon the confusion arising over the payment of a camping trip, and the delayed implementation of school curriculum initiatives. The biggest effect, however, was reported by the following principal:

> The time in writing the submission and the time in waiting for the submission is the biggest bugbear. With (two of) our submissions, the teachers who applied for it won't be using it. Both teachers will be going at the end of the year. If we had received the equipment earlier, they could have had the scheme going. Now, the equipment might be used next year but then again, it might not.

As mentioned above, teachers were not asked their opinions concerning the processing of school initiated submissions. During the course of the teacher interview however, there were five teachers who reported delays in this area. Negotiations with the Works Department appeared to be the major delay.

Summary

In summarising Section 3.6, the following points may be noted.

1. Three-fifths of the 19 principals who had submitted programs felt that the submitting procedure was ' fair enough ' or ' no troubles ', while the remaining two-fifths questioned aspects of it or suggested improvements. The major area of contention appeared to be the procedure of sending

submissions to the regional office. Some principals were in favour of it while others felt it unnecessary.

2. Approximately two-thirds of the 17 principals who had experience of the submission to implementation stage, reported that they had experienced delays in the processing of one or more of their school programs. Several reasons for these delays were noted. Approximately three-tenths of the 17 principals stated that the implementation of their programs had been affected by the delay. Several teachers also reported delays at this stage.

3.7 OPINIONS ON THE PROCEDURE FOR COMMUNICATING TO SCHOOLS THE RESULTS OR PROGRESS OF THE COMMITTEE'S DELIBERATIONS

As mentioned in Section 3.6, Section VIII of the *Special Program Schools Guidelines* explains what 'happens' to school initiated special program submissions after they have been sent to the Committee. Below is reprinted those details relevant to a discussion of the procedures for informing schools of the results of their efforts:

4. The Advisory Committee after consideration of the submission may make one of the following decisions:
   (a) recommend for approval
   (b) not recommend for approval
   (c) part recommend for approval
   (d) defer pending further information.
5. When a submission has been either fully or partly recommended by the Advisory Committee the executive officers prepare a Minute requesting approval from the relevant authority in the Department of Education. Depending upon circumstances within the Department and current policy the submission may or may not receive official approval . . .
6. If a submission is not recommended or not approved executive officers inform the school and indicate why the decision was made.
7. When a decision is deferred pending further information the school is requested to supply the additional information. (page 17)

Principals were asked their opinions on the procedures for communicating to schools the results of SPSS decisions on their programs. Of the 17 principals who had actually been informed of the Committee's decisions, seven of them (approximately two-fifths) were fairly pleased with the *formal* letter of notification. For most of these principals, the *informal* consultative procedures that had occurred in person or by telephone call between themselves and the SPSS section had also been beneficial. The following two quotes exemplify the positive response to both the formal and informal procedures:

> I got a letter saying it had been approved . . . it was quite good.

> The co-ordinator has always kept us well informed of what's happening — I've rung him and he's rung me.

The remaining 10 (approximately three-fifths) of the 17 principals felt that there were various inadequacies with the communication system. Four of them spoke of inadequate explanations given when their programs had problems or were not approved, as the following quote exemplifies:

I think that there could be more of an explanation as to why some things are knocked back . . . I don't want a lengthy document, just a few comments why, so that it just doesn't deflate the staff members who were involved in the preparation (of the submission).

A further five of the 10 principals spoke of 'being left in the dark' between the time a submission was sent to that of receiving notification of results. One of these principals expressed it in the following way:

I think that Special Programs could inform schools of what is going on. Sometimes you can sit and wait and not know what's going on. If we had just a proforma type letter to say that our program had not been forgotten — just some reassurance that something is going on. Sometimes you're left in the dark . . . In the end, you've got to get on the phone and ring them.

Finally, one of the 10 principals apparently was experiencing the deepest darkness of all!

Well I'm still waiting to find out whether I'm still on the Scheme. I don't know. I filled out the rating and that's the last I heard. It's pretty slow. If we were as slow in getting our returns in . . . The boot's on the other foot when *they* want things done quickly.

In reporting these findings, there are two points that should be noted. First, the contents of the formal letter of notification appeared to be reasonably satisfactory when positive information was being imparted, for example, when funding had been approved. However, where there had been problems with the submission, there was evidence to suggest that a more complete explanation was thought to be warranted, especially when a considerable amount of time had been spent in the preparation of the submission.

Second, it became clear from our discussions that while the formal letter of notification was necessary, informal personal consultation and communication was deemed to be a most important addition to the communication process. For example, of the seven principals who appeared to be happy with the notification of results procedure, five of them had personally discussed the progress of results of submissions with SPSS section personnel. This consultation had occurred through telephone calls or visits at the initiative of either party. For these principals, personal contact was valued highly. This point is reinforced where we look at those principals who expressed dissatisfaction with the notification procedure. With these principals, very little personal contact had occurred at the processing or result stage of submissions. Where personal contact had occurred, it had usually been a telephone call at the initiative of the principal, who found it necessary to see what had happened to this submission. The impression was that, rightly or wrongly, these principals felt it was the section's responsibility to inform schools of the progress of submissions and not the schools' job to ' chase it up '. This aspect became more important when there was an apparent delay in the processing of submissions or when there were actual problems with the submission itself.

The importance of informal communication is heightened when we give attention to the teacher data. Although very little time was given to the 'submission to implementation' aspects in the teacher interviews, in 11 of the 37 interviews, mention was made of advice received from and in consultation with SPSS. In four of these interviews, teachers spoke of the advice as being beneficial and in a further three, it was felt that there should be more opportunity for consultation. These two aspects are exemplified by the quotes below:

The telephone is there and that gets very good use. The piece of paper arrives and the phone calls start. Then it all falls into place. If that phone call thing didn't happen, then something would be wrong.

If a person could unburden to SPSS, it would help — the personal follow-up and a pat on the back occassionally.

Summary

In summarising Section 3.7, the following points may be noted.

1. Approximately two-fifths of the 17 principals who had actually been informed of the Committee's decisions, appeared to be satisfied with the communication procedures used to inform schools of the results or progress of their submissions, while the remaining three-fifths expressed various perceived inadequacies.
2. The major areas of concern in the communication of information appeared to be the apparent inadequate explanations given when a submission was not approved or was experiencing problems; and principals' feelings of ' being left in the dark ' at the submission processing stage, especially where there were apparent delays.
3. Personal contact as a communication medium was considered to be an important addition to the formal correspondence procedures already used. In this respect, it was felt by many principals that it was the Scheme's ' responsibility to inform ' and not the principals' ' need to request ' information on the progress or results of submissions. The importance of personal contact was reinforced by the opinions of those teachers who discussed the topic.

3.8 OPINIONS ON THE PROCEDURE FOR SUPPLYING SCHOOLS WITH THEIR PROGRAMS

Within the Scheme, there is funding in three major areas:

- equipment and materials;
- personnel (e.g. teacher aides, supply teachers); and
- excursions.

The *Special Program Schools Guidelines* gives information on the ways in which programs are 'supplied' to schools. Below are reprinted relevant sections from the *Guidelines* concerning what happens when a program has been approved.

- In the case of *equipment and materials*, ' . . . the school is notified and orders are placed on the various suppliers for the equipment required. ' (page 17)
- In the case of *personnel*, ' . . . the regional office is given authority to make payment . . . and claims for salary should be made in the normal manner by voucher. ' (pages 17 and 30)
- In the case of *excursions*, ' . . . the school receives an approval letter at the same time as a cheque is requested from the Accountant. The issuing of this cheque usually takes some weeks. When the cheque is sent to the school, an accompanying letter listing the (following) conditions is included. ' (page 27)

To summarise the supply procedure, the administrative structure for funding the various programs is centralised in nature. Equipment and materials are purchased by the section itself; and aides and other personnel are paid in a similar fashion to other equivalent Departmental employees. Only in the case of excursion programs is a direct grant paid to the school (for the purpose of paying buses, tickets, etc.)

Opinions on the procedures for supplying schools with their programs were sought from principals. These opinions are reported under the following headings:

- central buying vs school buying; and
- difficulties in supply of equipment and materials.

Central buying vs school buying

Much of the discussion revolved around the central buying procedure for the purchase of equipment and materials. Principals in 20 of the schools were qualified to give an opinion since they had either received equipment or knew of the procedure. Opinions were divided on this issue with 12 principals favouring it; three principals favouring both procedures; and five principals favouring school buying. These opinions are discussed below.

To begin, twelve of the 20 principals tended to favour central buying. The major reason for favouring this procedure was that it lightened the load of the school, especially where there was some distance from access to the supplier. Another reason that was mentioned was the greater purchasing power of bulk buying. Central buying was thought to be cheaper. The following quotes exemplify these two reasons for the preferred central buying procedure.

Easier:

I think that's good, because it's less handling for the schools themselves. I think that's where they do save the schools some time by doing that. The only time we have to approach the firms themselves is when we're getting a quote (at the submission writing stage).

Cheaper:

If I could guarantee the same prices, I'd suggest using the local firm because it builds up a customer relationship. But the great differences in the price is not worth the customer well being. The prices were far cheaper than what I could obtain locally.

Three of the 20 principals felt that both central buying and school buying were good procedures, the choice being dependent on various factors. One principal thought that equipment on the Departmental catalogue should be centrally bought, while other equipment should be bought by the school. A second principal felt that if the equipment was available locally, it should be bought by the school, and if it wasn't available, central buying should be used. Finally, a third principal felt that only the ' great big stuff ' should be bought centrally. This principal referred to a specific problem with the central servicing of small items such as a VCR. He felt that local buying would allow the convenience of having this piece of equipment serviced locally using the warranty card.

The remaining five of the 20 principals tended to favour a school buying procedure. The major reason for this preference was the greater efficiency mainly in terms of time. For example, one principal expressed his opinion in this way:

Maybe if I was to ring up a firm and say this is the State School here, I might get away with it a lot quicker than a big group called the Education Department. Maybe it would be better if we had the money and they didn't — a submission has to have quotes so that you have to be in contact with the firm anyway.

Difficulties in supply of equipment and materials

Apart from opinions concerning the procedures for buying equipment and materials, principals offered opinions on how the equipment was supplied.

In general, the impression was that most of the 16 principals who had experience in receiving equipment and materials, were satisfied and happy with the items that were supplied. Principals had received the equipment that they had wanted or were supplied with a suitable substitute.

While this is so, six of the 16 principals reported that they had experienced problems with supply. The source of the problem appeared to be the suppliers and not SPSS. In the schools that were visited in this study, the problem appeared to be greatest in the supply of reading material and musical instruments, as the following quotes exemplify:

Musical instruments:

> It's not the special program schools — they've ordered the equipment, but the firms just can't supply. When the orders don't come through we've got to try to get in contact with the firm — you write letters repeatedly — and when the prices go up in the interim, special programs have got to submit another order . . . With the trumpet, we've had about three sets of orders. Special programs followed it up too. We've tried the business firm from all sides — but that still doesn't do any good.

Books:

> With the reading program, it took six months from the time approved to get everything . . . it means that you don't have the things you want to use.

Problems with supply were also reported by 10 teachers. This was the major reported difficulty affecting the implementation of teachers' programs:

> It all flowed very smoothly except for initial logistic problems of supply. It was a major problem in the early stages. As a matter of fact, there are still items we haven't got till this day on the original order. Almost 18 months have gone and the suppliers still haven't acknowledged their inability to supply. We chased. He didn't acknowledge. We went to special programs. They investigated. I would have thought the Department would have a more reliable supplier.

Summary

In summarising Section 3.8, the following points may be noted.

1. There were differing opinions concerning whether or not principals favoured the centralised buying procedure adopted by special program schools. While this is so, there were twice as many principals who favoured central buying as desired direct school buying.
2. While most principals were quite satisfied with the equipment and materials that they had received, approximately one-third of them had experienced delays in the supply of equipment, after approval had been received. Reading material and musical instruments were frequently mentioned. The cause for this delay appeared to be problems with the supplier and not SPSS. Similar opinions were expressed by those teachers who discussed the problem.

3.9 WAYS IN WHICH SPSS PROGRAMS ARE IMPLEMENTED AND EVALUATED

Given the design of this evaluation, it was not possible to provide a detailed answer concerning the operation of SPSS programs in practice. For this to occur, case study approaches and observational techniques would have been desirable. Nevertheless, both principals and teachers (and where applicable, community persons) spoke in general terms of how their programs were implemented and evaluated. In particular, they reported who were the major contributors to implementation and what evaluation techniques were used.

Major contributors to implementation

It became clear from the responses that the major contributors to the implementation of special programs were teaching staff, including teaching principals, normal classroom teachers and, of course, personnel employed through school initiated programs. A small number of programs had involved teaching staff in the organisation and maintenance of equipment and materials but the vast majority placed or aided the implementors in a teaching role, mainly within normal curriculum areas.

Community involvement in the implementation of programs appeared to occur only in a small number of schools. For example, only in eight (approximately one-fifth) of the 37 teacher interviews was it reported that there had been community participation in their particular program/s. The types of programs in which there had been community involvement, were mainly 'out of school' activities (e.g. tennis club, adventurers club, camping trips, excursions) or programs in the curriculum areas of music, art and physical education.

In summary, then, most school initiated special programs appeared to be implemented by school based personnel, mainly teachers in a teaching role. Community involvement was limited.

Program evaluation by principals and teachers

In general discussion with principals and teachers, it was found that not many programs had been formally evaluated by them. For example, in 18 of 28 interviews (three-fifths) in which the topic was discussed, teachers answered that to the best of their knowledge, no evaluation had been carried out on their programs. Only where continuing programs had been submitted had an evaluation been undertaken. This was a requirement of the SPSS Committee.

Where an evaluation had been carried out, tests of achievement and/or subjective assessments had been used, including questionnaires, log books, photographs, etc.

Overall, the impression gained was that there was some confusion concerning the requirements for evaluation, and doubt about the best way of undertaking it. Consequently, unless an evaluation was required, only a minority of school personnel had bothered.

Summary

In summarising Section 3.9, the following points may be noted.

1. The major contributors to the implementation of special programs were teaching staff, including teaching principals, normal classroom teachers and personnel employed through school initiated programs.
2. The majority of programs placed implementors in a teaching role within normal curriculum areas or aided them in this role.
3. Community involvement in the implementation of programs was limited, and mainly concerned with 'out of school' activities or the curriculum areas of physical education, art and craft, or music.
4. Apart from where an evaluation was required by SPSS (in the case of continuing programs), most principals and teachers had not undertaken a formal evaluation of their programs. Many were in doubt as to the best way to go about it.

3.10 OPINIONS ON THE ELIGIBILITY OF PRESENT SCHOOLS TO REMAIN ON THE SCHEME

In this final section on the organisational aspects and requirements of the Special Program Schools Scheme, a brief account is made of opinions concerning what is the final administrative act concerning an SPSS school — its exit from the Scheme. Since the continuing membership of any SPSS school is at the discretion of the SPSS Advisory Committee, it was important to give to the Committee some idea of school perceptions on this issue.

During the course of the interviews, principals in 16 (two-thirds) of the 24 schools spoke of the length of time which they felt their school should remain on the Scheme. Where an opinion had been sought, the initial response was ' Indefinitely! ' In a more considered opinion, however, most principals indicated that they felt they should stay on the Scheme as long as their present disadvantaged condition prevailed. Most principals did not anticipate any possible change in the near future to those factors that had placed them on the Scheme in the first place. Below is the way in which one principal expressed it:

> I think that the needs of the school won't change all that much — the isolation part of it and the fact that children's experiences are very limited — that probably won't change . . . the school should stay on it.

While most responses were in accordance with the above theme, there were three principals who perceived a changing milieu in their school. These perceptions are reported in full below.

In a frank appraisal of his school's situation, one principal stated:

> I've seen a lot of schools who are a lot worse than this one, so I can't say unless I know how all other schools are, how much we deserve to be on the Scheme.

Another principal stated:

> The further the Scheme goes on, the less we should want out of the Scheme . . .

And a third principal answered:

> I don't think at this stage we're very worried about the equipment side of things. If they could say we won't supply you with any school initiated funding but you can keep the aide time . . . But whether we are entitled to aide time compared to other schools I don't know.

In summary then, most principals felt that their disadvantaged condition was such that they should be still entitled to the full benefits of the Scheme. A small minority of principals, however, were not so certain.

To place the importance of SPSS funding in context, principals were also asked about the availability of other funding sources. Most discussions centred upon the Parents and Citizens Association (P & C). Some principals reported that the P & C had been able to purchase new equipment and materials, but most schools, especially the smaller ones, used P & C funds for recurrent items, such as additional stationery purchases, duplicating material, audio-visual expendables, ground maintenance, as well as contributions to special program projects. Many schools suffered from the difficulties of raising money in a disadvantaged area. As one principal put it:

> In other schools, it could come from the P & C. In this school it can't. When Dad's driving a $200 car, he can't afford $200 for a musical instrument.

Summary

In summarising Section 3.10, the following points may be noted.

1. Most principals felt that their school should remain on the SPSS as long as the present disadvantaged conditions prevailed. A minority of principals were uncertain as to their continued eligibility.
2. Most principals felt that their P & C would not be in a position to continue the task commenced by SPSS. The main involvement of the P & C was in the recurrent spending area.

3.11 DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

(See Summary of conclusions and recommendations on page 47)

This chapter has concentrated on the organisational aspects of the Scheme, especially as they affect the schools themselves. The approach has been to proceed sequentially from those issues associated with entering the Scheme to those associated with leaving it.

An examination of the summary statements at the end of each section shows that there are several major themes running through the chapter. These themes suggest the need for review of the Scheme's organisational procedures in the following areas:

- school eligibility procedures;
- submission planning and preparation guidelines;
- program submitting, processing and supplying procedures;
- program evaluation requirements;
- communication practices between SPSS and schools; and
- community involvement guidelines.

The section first of all considers each of these aspects separately and then ends with a summary of conclusions and recommendations arising from the findings outlined in Chapter 3.

School eligibility procedures

In discussing the eligibility of schools on the SPSS, the major issue that emerges is whether or not SPSS schools are different from other schools in terms of the four designated areas of 'disadvantage': Socio-economic level; Isolation; Aboriginality; and Migrancy. This question is a difficult one to answer, especially when only the perceptions of persons *on* the Scheme were recorded. No point of comparison is possible between schools that are on the Scheme and those that are not eligible. Although this is a limitation, the perceptions of principals within the present sample does raise some important issues concerning eligibility.

To begin, it is probably not surprising to find that most principals who were interviewed felt that the eligibility questionnaire provided a fairly accurate and true picture of their school's disadvantage. It is also not surprising to find that most principals felt that their eligibility should remain unchanged as long as their present disadvantaged condition prevailed. Of greatest interest are the *implications* for special program schools of some of the other opinions expressed by principals.

Looking at the eligibility to *enter* the Scheme, while an investigation of the validity of the eligibility questionnaire (especially the SEL scale) is outside the scope of this evaluation, the opinions of

principals do call into focus the need to look at the reliability of the instrument. As reported earlier, most principals reported real or potential problems in completing the questionnaire. By implication, these areas require some consideration.

Looking at the eligibility of schools to *remain* on the Scheme, the responses of most principals were such as to indicate that there were very few other financial resources available to them. Indeed, the impression was that while there were a minority of schools where eligibility was in doubt, the majority of schools were suffering one or more of the four areas of disadvantage to the extent necessary to remain on the scheme. There are two implications for special program schools concerning this impression. First, regular reviews should be made of special program schools in order to delete those schools that are no longer eligible. Second, interviews with principals indicate that change in eligibility is a very slow moving creature. On the grounds of disadvantage defined above, it would be expected that the annual turnover percentage of schools on the Scheme would usually be reasonably small.

Submission planning and preparation guidelines

This section first of all looks at the role of needs assessment in program planning and then considers the types of submission formats desired.

As far as the role of needs assessment is concerned, it was found that the majority of schools tended to 'depart' from the *Guidelines* when choosing the programs for which they wished to apply. Indeed, there was a strong leaning towards an 'apply as the need arises' selection process. In attempting to explain the preference for this process over that of a more formalised needs assessment, there are two points that should be considered.

The first point to note is the finding that secondary schools and smaller primary schools tended to apply as the need arose whereas most larger primary schools at least tried some form of needs assessment. In the case of smaller primary schools, perhaps principals feel that the school size tends to make needs assessment and prioritisation of needs redundant because the priorities of the school appear fairly obvious.

Looking now at those larger schools, the differences between primary and secondary schools in their approach to program selection, may be explained in the following way. The administration of secondary schools is, by virtue of necessity, more decentralised than primary schools, because of the various subject departments in the secondary area. It is conceivable, then, that the implementation of needs assessment is more difficult in secondary schools than primary, because of the scattered interests throughout it. This conception is reinforced by the finding that secondary teachers are the dominant submission writers in secondary schools, while the principals of primary schools appear to have more involvement in this area.

In conclusion to this first point, it may be stated that formalised needs assessment might be seen by school personnel to be an unnecessary step in smaller primary schools, and an impractical step for secondary schools, given the difficulties of implementatjon. On the other hand, the more centralised nature of the larger primary schools, and the greater involvement of principals, might be conducive to some kind of formalised needs assessment.

The second point to note about needs assessment is related, in part, to the first point. It is concerned with the perceived need to harness the enthusiasm of school personnel as soon as

possible after an idea for a program occurs. Perhaps this aspect may be best explained by looking at a quote from a secondary principal, who had tried needs assessment but had abandoned it in favour of a more ad hoc 'apply as the need arises' approach:

> Initially I said to all staff to look around the school to see areas of need, and they did — I got ten. So I said, 'We're supposed to put an order of priority on these things' . . . This was very hard. So I said, 'I'm not going to put an order of priority since I think they're all worthwhile . . . As you get your submission ready, then I will submit them in that order'. At the top, you're only as good as the enthusiasm below you . . . I think I hit on the right way to do it. As we saw something as an area of need, that was submitted.

It could well be, then, that given the volunteer part-time nature of submission writing and the heavy involvement of school personnel in this exercise (especially secondary teachers), it might be seen to be more beneficial, even necessary for a principal to act upon the enthusiasm of school personnel at the time it occurs, and not according to an overall needs assessment scheme.

Perhaps for the reasons expressed above, the 'apply as the need arises' approach appears to have become the preferred method, especially for smaller primary schools and secondary schools. Given this situation, it may be an opportune time to review those needs assessment suggestions outlined in the *Special Program Schools Guidelines*.

Turning now to the types of submission formats desired, there are several points that require discussion.

First, it is perhaps not surprising that only a minority of principals and teachers expressed a personal liking for the required format. It is to be expected that the task of submission writing would be viewed as a means to an enjoyable end rather than an enjoyable means to an end. While this is so, the 'complaints' expressed by principals and teachers about the format, warrants further examination.

Looking at the 'complaints' expressed by some principals concerning duplication in submission writing, the first aspect referred to by principals was ' background information '. There is a case for stating that the supplying of ' background information ' with each new program is a repetitious exercise. It is true that all ' background information ' should be written with reference to the *present proposed program*, but, on the evidence of principals, this section appears to change very little with each new program. Of course, the inclusion of ' background information ' is probably convenient for program processors, but this is not to say that some alternative arrangement could not be worked out. The second aspect of duplication referred to by principals was that concerned with ' continuing ' programs. There appears to be less justification for this opinion. There is nothing in the *Guidelines* to suggest that continuing programs are required to repeat the content of the previous (new) program, apart from the normal identifying data. While this is so, it is expected that a certain degree of overlap would exist between a new and continuing program, and this may require examination.

Looking now at teachers 'complaints', it will be recalled that there were statements concerning the time consuming nature of submission writing and the mechanical difficulties encountered, especially the ' Budget ' section. With respect to this latter point, unfortunately, there does not appear to be an easy solution. With respect to the former point, however, the time consuming nature of the task, something more can be said.

To begin, it is true that the demands of the submission writing format are fairly high. These demands may be judged in a positive light as well as a negative one. On the one hand, the amount of thought required in program development can only contribute to the clarification of the purposes and practicalities of a program. On the other hand, submission writing is a mainly part-time, out of school activity and merely just another added responsibility for a conscientious principal or teacher. While this is so, one area that requires further investigation is principals' and teachers' concepts of what is required of submission writers. It must be reported that, nowhere in the *Guidelines* is it suggested that a *lengthy* submission is required. The impressions of the researchers, however, were that most submission writers felt that a lengthy document was required for success. This feeling seems erroneous and indeed, may have contributed to the length of submission writing.

In any review of the submission writing format, the following further positions taken by principals also should be considered. First, it is important to note principals' consciousness concerning the accountable nature of school based funding. Second, it is evident that principals would prefer accountable submissions to be expressed in *narrative* form. As to which form of narrative, it will have been noted that the majority felt that the present format was appropriate mainly because of its accountable nature. It will also have been noted that approximately one-half of principals spoke of some type of format streamlining, and one-third had suggested some alternative format. These views might be useful inputs into the Committee's deliberations.

Program submitting, processing and supplying procedures

In examining the views of school personnel, there was substantial evidence to suggest that delays had been experienced by various schools in the three areas of submitting, processing and supply. A minority of schools responded that delays had been caused by the ' cumbersome ' submitting procedure; a majority of schools spoke of delays at the processing stage; and a minority had experienced problems with the supply of approved programs.

The findings indicate areas where attention might be focused in order to decrease delays. As far as the *submitting* procedure is concerned, the majority were fairly happy with it. The major area of contention appeared to be connected with the necessity to submit to regional office. On this aspect, however, opinions appeared to be divided with some principals favouring this procedure and other principals feeling that it increased delays. Given this division, the issue is not an easy one for decision-makers if they should desire to give attention to it.

At the other end of the system are the *supply* problems. First, it would appear that, overall, principals were more satisfied with a central buying procedure than a school based one, mainly because it is "easier" or "cheaper" for them. While this is so, the opinion expressed by one-quarter of principals that school based buying would be more efficient *in terms of time*, is not to be discounted. It would appear, however, that, in many cases, delays in supply is not so much the product of central buying itself but the result of the tardiness of suppliers. The opinions expressed by those principals and teachers who had experienced delays in supply, are such as to warrant an investigation of the ability of some suppliers to ' come up with the goods '. An investigation of this issue may not necessarily be confined to SPSS. Indeed, it is probable that the problem of the supply of educational materials is a Department of Education concern and not only that of SPSS.

Finally, we return to the central area of *processing* programs, where a majority of principals answered that they had experienced delays. Various reasons were given for these delays. It is interesting to note, however, that less than one-half of those principals who experienced delays,

answered that the delay had actually affected the implementation of their programs. For the remainder, then, it may be concluded that the delays were perhaps more an inconvenience than a 'real' problem. Nevertheless, an investigation into a possible streamlining of the system could be undertaken in those areas discussed by principals.

Looking at the areas discussed by principals, there may be merit in reviewing those procedures requiring the co-operation of other sections within the Department and also other governmental departments (especially Works Department). Another possible area for review is the delay caused by problems with submissions (and submitters) themselves. This area is associated with the submitters' degree of sophistication of knowledge about the Scheme's procedures and requirements (already discussed in previous sections). Finally, another topic for review could be the size of the SPSS section itself and its ability to process submissions quickly, especially during various peak times of the year. On this latter point, it should be noted that, at present, there is no limitation on the time when a proposed program can be submitted to SPSS during the year. This aspect could well be an issue in itself. Whether or not this policy is desirable cannot be discussed further here, however, as no data were collected from schools concerning this topic.

Program evaluation requirements

As was noted in Section 3.9, the general impression from the interviews was that unless the program is a continuing one, only limited attention is given to systematic evaluation of their programs. There is merit in reviewing the requirements of the evaluation component in submissions. There also appeared to be doubt expressed by some principals and teachers about how best to go about an evaluation. This problem should also concern SPSS, although the total remedy probably falls outside the section.

Communication practices between SPSS and schools

This section first of all looks at issues involved in communicating a knowledge of the Scheme to schools and then considers the area of communicating the progress and results of submissions to schools.

In Section 3.2, one of the most important findings was that there appeared to be sufficient information available to enable most schools to have submissions prepared and sent to the SPSS Committee. While this is so, the results revealed that there were real communication/liaison problems associated with Class 5 one-teacher primary schools and potential problems with secondary schools. Given these findings, a good argument exists for treating Class 5 schools as special cases when supplying information to special program schools. There is also merit in investigating further the ways in which knowledge of SPSS is communicated in secondary schools.

Apart from these exceptions to the general finding about the overall 'sufficiency of information', it is impossible to draw any further conclusions about the adequacy of *individual* sources. This is because of the many combinations of information sources that were present — different sources meant different things to different people. While this is so, it is possible to look further at the quality of the *overall* information delivery system, especially in terms of the *quality* of proposed programs which are in part the results of using such information.

In Section 3.2, it was stated that principals obtained information from a variety of sources upon arriving at a special program school. It was also found that the only *uniform* information available appeared to be the *Special Program Schools Guidelines* (the ' green book '). As reported earlier,

these *Guidelines* were invariably used in conjunction with other sources. The most prominent of these sources were copies of previous submissions. Indeed, there appeared to be a high degree of dependence upon using copies of previous submissions as models for future program planning. This apparent dependency raises an important issue, namely, the overall appropriateness of using this source of information.

During the Phase II discussions, it was observed that the appropriateness or quality of a previous submission tended to be judged by whether or not it was successful in receiving funding. In Phase I of this study, however, it was found that the vast majority (86 per cent) of submitted programs were either approved or partly approved. Given this high rating, it is therefore doubtful that funding approval should be regarded as a high indicator of the quality of submission writing (unless of course, most submissions were actually of the desired high quality). This leads to the conclusion that submission writing possibly occurs by reference to models which could be neither appropriate, or more importantly, desired by the SPSS Committee. If this is so, there might be a case for providing further *uniform* information to all special program schools, perhaps along the lines of committee-generated examples of submission writing. The role, if any, of the local inspectorate might also be considered in the provision of further necessary information to special program schools.

Of course, the priority of such additional information has to be considered in the light of the Committee's own degree of satisfaction with present submission writing standards. But, as a reading of several hundred of the submissions revealed during the course of Phase I of this evaluation, the standard of submissions varied greatly. While complete uniformity would probably defeat the purpose of *school initiated* programs, it might also be concluded that greater uniformity of standard is desired and therefore more uniform 'getting to know' information is also desirable.

Another issue in the communications area is the adequacy of the practices used in communicating the progress and results of submissions to schools. The discussion on delays in another section above draws attention to the need to communicate the *progress* of submissions. Indeed, given the minority of principals who reported that the delays had affected the implementation of their programs, it may well be that for many, the real problem is not the delay but the lack of *knowledge* of what's happening *during* the delay. These findings point towards the need for SPSS to initiate further systematic communication between schools and themselves during the processing stage.

The communication of *results* also requires further thought. Sufficient concern was expressed by principals to warrant a more detailed explanation of why a particular decision was reached, especially regarding unsuccessful programs.

Of course, any kind of communication with schools is a labour intensive time consuming task. Consideration would have to be given to the feasibility of increased communication given existing resources. The findings of this evaluation, however, indicate that where additional communiction between SPSS and schools had occurred, especially personal contact, it had been appreciated and generally had been found to be beneficial. Indeed, greater communication is probably the key to an improved association between SPSS and its schools.

Guidelines for community involvement

One of the most important findings of the evaluation has been the limited role which the community apparently has played in the selection, preparation and implementation of school initiated programs. Indeed, the major contributors were school administrative or teaching personnel.

The dependence on the participation of school personnel was expressed in this way by two principals:

> You've got to have somebody on your staff. If you've got nobody on your staff that's interested, then it doesn't get off the ground.

> While I know that special programs wanted a great deal of parent input, it seemed though that it was worked at the teacher level because we had to get teachers to operate it.

If these statements are generally true (and it would appear to be so from this evaluation), then the role of the community desired by the SPSS Advisory Committee may need to be re-examined. In this respect, there are two possible areas of concern which could be addressed, namely, whether or not it is necessary for the community to be involved closely in the selection, planning and implementation of school initiated programs and (if it is still felt to be desirable), what is the best way in which community involvement can be assured.

Summary of conclusions and recommendations

In examining the findings of Chapter 3 on the Scheme's organisational requirements and procedures, the evaluation reaches the following conclusions and recommendations.

School eligibility:

1. While most principals felt that the questionnaire to be completed for entry to the scheme was an accurate representation of their schools' disadvantage, other opinions expressed by principals point to the need to look at the reliability of the questionnaire instrument.
2. While regular reviews should be carried out to determine the continued eligibility of each SPSS school, the degree of disadvantage found in most of the visited schools indicates that the annual turnover of schools on the Scheme should probably be reasonably small.

Submission planning and preparation guidelines:

3. Given the findings that the majority of schools tended to apply for programs as the need arose, the needs assessment suggestions outlined in the *Special Program Schools Guidelines* should be reviewed.
4. There is sufficient evidence to warrant a review of the *Guidelines* submission writing format and for the Committee to provide further details in this regard. Some aspects for consideration include:
   - the repetitious aspects of submission writing;
   - its time consuming nature;
   - the impression that a lengthy submission is required;
   - the necessary accountable nature of submissions;
   - opinions on the streamlining of the present format; and
   - the suggestions for alternative formats.

Submitting, processing and supplying programs:

5. While it would appear that only a minority of school programs have been severely affected by the delays occurring between the dates of submission and implementation of programs, an investigation of the reported delays should be made for the purpose of streamlining the system. In this respect, consideration should be given to the following points:
   - the divided opinions of principals over the need to submit programs to regional office;
   - the satisfaction of the majority with the central buying procedure;
   - the apparent tardiness of some equipment suppliers;
   - the procedures adopted for ascertaining the co-operation of other sections within the Department and other government departments;
   - the delays caused by the submitters themselves; and
   - the adequacy of the SPSS section's size in being able to cope with processing submissions promptly at peak times.

Program evaluation requirements:

6. Given schools' limited attention to the formal evaluation of programs and the doubts expressed about how best to go about it, the requirements in the evaluation area should be re-examined.

Communication between the section and schools:

7. While there appeared to be sufficient information available to enable most schools to have submissions prepared and sent to the SPSS Committee, there is merit in investigating alternative or additional methods of communicating a knowledge of the Scheme to Class 5 primary schools and possibly secondary schools also.
8. While complete uniformity would probably defeat the purpose of *school initiated* programs, the varying standard of submission writing suggests that there is a case for providing further uniform information in addition to the *Guidelines* to all SPSS schools. Committee-generated examples of submission writing could be a first step, while the advisory role of the local inspectorate could also be considered.
9. Increased communication between SPSS and school during all stages from program submission to implementation would appear to be a worthwhile and justifiable investment. Some aspects which could be considered include:
   - the communication of the progress of submissions especially those experiencing delays;
   - the communication of the results of submissions especially the partly approved and not approved programs;
   - the importance of personal contact whether it be in person or by telephone; and
   - the labour intensive nature of communication processes.

Community involvement guidelines:

10. Given the limited role played by the community in selecting, preparing and implementing submissions, a re-examination should be made of what is desired in this area.

4. EVALUATION OF SPSS PROGRAMS IN SCHOOLS

This chapter examines the end product of the Special Program Schools Scheme — the programs themselves. An examination is made of both school initiated and systems initiated programs by looking at opinions on success, perceived problems and preferred funding types. Finally, an attempt is made to characterise in general terms what may be regarded as a 'good' SPSS program. It is in this section more than any other that the 'spirit' of the Scheme is conveyed.

The chapter has been organised under the following headings:

- the success of school initiated programs;
- opinions on the problems affecting the success of school initiated programs;
- the success of systems initiated programs;
- opinions on problems associated with systems initiated funding;
- systems initiated funding vs school initiated funding;
- the characteristics of a 'good' SPSS program; and
- discussion, conclusions and recommendations.

4.1 THE SUCCESS OF SCHOOL INITIATED PROGRAMS

This section is divided into three parts:

- opinions of principals and teachers;
- the effect of school initiated programs on implementors; and
- the condition and use of equipment and materials.

Opinions of principals and teachers

Given the interest and the large amount of time spent in procuring and implementing a school initiated program, it is to be expected that the personal identification of principals and teachers with their programs would be high, and that any assessment of success would be influenced by this identification. While this is so, principals and teachers revealed something of the meaning of special programs for a school, and how, in their eyes, the quality of the school milieu had been affected. It is this aspect to which the reader is directed in this section.

In discussing the topic of program success, the impression was that principals and teachers were generally very pleased with what special program schools had allowed them to carry out in their

schools. While there had been problems with some programs (discussed in Section 4.2) the overall impression was that of success, rather than failure. Indeed, most principals and teachers stated that most of their programs had been ' very successful '.

The reasons for success were many, and usually idiosyncratic to a particular program, but most responses centred in some way upon how the school had been affected, especially the children. The majority of SPSS school initiated programs had enabled student participation in activities to which they otherwise would not have been exposed. Some programs had increased student knowledge and skill acquisition, and still others had contributed to children's social development.

In order to communicate some idea of the feeling of success expressed by principals and teachers, the following extended sample of quotes is included so as to convey the perceived quality of the special program experience at the school level.

First, *equipment and material programs:*

> The cultural enrichment (drama equipment) program was one in which we all changed — the staff changed and the students of year eleven changed from a rabble into a quiet, united thoughtful group of young people.

> The tennis court would be used on the frequency of once a day — that includes Saturday and Sunday — a subcommittee of the P & C regulates the use of it. The racquets — you wouldn't recognise them because of use.

> You can't knock an adventure playground. I had trouble in keeping my kids off it while the builders were building it. The little kids get a heap of fun out of it. They're over there all the time — it's been a success — an adventure playground always is.

> Very successful just from the amount of use it gets and problems you have trying to book a time into the (A-V equipment) room. It's the ability of this media to broaden children's experiences.

> (Our school) had a reputation like 'if you plant a tree there, you'll find that it will be pulled out' — but we found that, by involving kiddies, that was not the case. I think that if anyone goes to the school now, you'll see something different — it worked (re school environment program).

> The woodwork program was highly successful because it has given children the opportunity for a hands on activity, so vitally needed by kids.

> To me the program has been absolutely fantastic. It has a very good name around the place. Over the years there's been nothing but positive feedback all the way through. We've involved the community around the area. It has only been successful because of the people who have been closely involved (re adventurers club equipment).

Next, *personnel programs:*

> Remedial programs were very successful in terms of attitude and achievement — the results of using top rate personnel in direct contact with kids.

> It's been really good. It's been this bloke that we've got teaching it — it's his professionalism, his interest, his attitude, the way he handles the kiddies. He gets on with the parents — it's everything (re music tutor program).

We had a rather dramatic success rate. It took me by surprise. The dropout rate was almost nil, apart from a few minor emotional problems. It was not just a novelty, it was something the kids seemed to starve for. On an average night, they've got nothing to do so the kids have grabbed this music as something to do on the farm (re music tutor program).

Finally, *excursion programs:*

Any trip away from school to look at anything in the outside community is beaut — when they go away, they're the best kids you've seen.

I think it's brought to these kids the realisation that being placed in this high school situation isn't the frightening situation it's often made out to be. This is the whole basis of having this induction program (re induction camp).

I think it's brought into the range of more students, the ability to participate. Before we knew our application would be approved we asked the students to pay $20. On that figure, we had 100-120 wanting to go. After we got the approval we dropped the cost to $10. Immediately we had an influx. We ended up getting 220 going — nearly 100 more came as a result of the funding.

The effect of school initiated programs on implementors

Since teachers were the major force behind the implementation of programs, they were asked whether or not their involvement in SPSS programs had changed their job as a teacher in any way. There were many differing responses to this question, but the overall impression from the majority was that the program in which they were involved, had contributed to the broadening of their educational experience.

Of the 29 teachers who discussed this topic, five teachers (one-sixth — all secondary) answered that there had been no real change in their job. A further seven teachers (one-quarter) talked about an increased workload: ' It made me pretty busy during lunchtime. ' Seven teachers spoke of either their improved relationships with children or the increased enjoyment experienced by children in their classrooms: ' It improved relationships with kids because they really enjoyed it. ' Another seven teachers spoke of how SPSS had affected them personally in their role as teachers. These effects included an improved teaching style, greater personal satisfaction, increased awareness of children, improved insights into other subjects and the development of other interests: ' It has given me more satisfaction if anything '. The remaining three teachers answered that their special programs had helped to improve staff or parent relations.

In summary, then, the effect of school initiated programs on the majority of implementors appeared to be fairly positive.

The condition and the use of equipment and materials

As noted in Chapter 2, the most frequently funded school initiated program type between January 1979 and March 1981 was equipment and materials. An Observation Schedule (Appendix 5) was used to record observations of SPSS funded equipment and materials during the school visits. Of the 80 programs that were discussed during the school visits, 59 included equipment and materials and 52 of them were able to be observed by the researchers.

The observation of equipment and materials was very helpful in enabling the expansion or confirmation of information collected through interviews. This section presents the results of these

observations by considering first the *condition*, and then the *use* of SPSS funded equipment and materials.

The *condition* of the equipment and materials was judged according to what could be expected, given its use and age. As far as the latter is concerned, it is important to note that in 47 (nine-tenths) of the 52 observed programs, the equipment had been purchased after the beginning of 1980, with one-half being purchased in 1981.

The results of the Observation Schedule showed the condition of equipment and material to be as follows:

- in 24 of the 52 programs (46 per cent), equipment was judged to be in *excellent* conditions, e.g. no faults were observed, with equipment being free of scratches, dents, dust;
- in 21 of the programs (40 per cent), the equipment was in *good* condition, e.g. no faults observed, clean, with minor surface scratches;
- in five programs (10 per cent), equipment was in *fair* condition, e.g. in working order but evidence of scratches, dustiness.
- in two programs (four per cent), equipment was in *poor* condition, e.g. in working order but with some problems in operation; and
- in no programs was equipment judged to be in *very poor* condition, that is, not working at all.

In respect to the condition of the equipment, the following points may be noted.

- Re maintenance: In 29 of the 33 programs (88 per cent) which required some form of maintenance, it was observed that regular maintenance was carried out, that is, there appeared to be regular servicing, cleaning, painting, repairing of minor faults, regular safety checks, etc. In the remaining four programs, items were dirty, with minor faults being left unattended. (There were also five items that had been purchased recently and therefore did not fall into either of the above categories.
- Re responsibility for care of equipment: In all programs except one, there appeared to be a particular person who was responsible for supervising the use of SPSS equipment and materials. In 34 of the 52 programs (65 per cent) which were observed, teachers appeared to be responsible for organising or supervising the use of the equipment. In 12 programs (23 per cent), it was the principal; in three programs (six per cent), a community representative; one program, a teacher aide; and one program, the groundsman.
- Re storage of equipment: In 38 of the 41 programs (93 per cent) that required storage, equipment and materials appeared to be stored adequately. Eleven programs had included storage in their request for SPSS funding. The equipment and materials were observed to be stored in the following positions: 18 of the 41 programs (44 per cent) were stored in the normal classroom; eight programs (20 per cent), in a storage shed in the school grounds or under school buildings; seven programs (17 per cent), in the school library; seven programs in the teachers' preparation room; and one program in the school grounds.

In summary, then, it may be concluded from the observation of visits, that equipment and materials funded through SPSS, was in generally good to excellent condition, and ready for use when required.

Given that the equipment was ready for *use* when required, how *often* was it used? In discussions during the observational visits, the following results were obtained:

- in 34 (65 per cent) of the 52 programs, the equipment was judged to have been used *very often*, usually daily during the period of intended use, or at least three days per week;

- in 20 of the programs, the equipment had been used or was in use on the day of the visit;
- in 15 programs (29 per cent), the equipment was used *often*, that is, approximately once or twice a week;
- in two programs, equipment was used *rarely*, one of them less than once per month and another, less than once yearly, if at all; and
- in a final program, the equipment had not been used yet due to its recent arrival.

As to who were the main users of the equipment and materials, it was found that in 36 of the 52 programs, equipment was used by students; in 14 of the programs, it was used by staff of the school as a teaching aid or to prepare teaching aids; and in 10 programs, it was used by the local community.

While equipment and materials appeared to be used often, there were several observed problems that were related to the condition and utilisation of a small minority of programs. These problems were usually specific to particular programs and are presented in Appendix 7.

Summary

In summarising Section 4.1, the following points may be noted.

1. Most principals and teachers stated that most of their school initiated programs had been very successful. Most responses centred in some way upon how the school had been affected, especially the children.
2. The effect of school initiated programs on the majority of implementors appeared to be fairly positive. Teachers reported on aspects that contributed to the broadening of their educational experience.
3. Equipment and materials funded through SPSS were in generally good to excellent condition, ready for use when required. They tended to be used often by program implementors mainly for the direct benefit of students. Problems related to condition and use were observed with only a small minority of programs.

4.2 OPINIONS ON THE PROBLEMS AFFECTING THE SUCCESS OF SCHOOL INITIATED PROGRAMS

It will have been seen from Section 4.1 that, overall, principals and teachers felt the operation of special programs within their schools had been successful. In the interviews however, attention was drawn to several problems that had been encountered, and which had marred the success of some programs. Attention was drawn to the following:

- problems involved in teacher dependent equipment programs;
- problems with the non-continuity of personnel employed through the Scheme;
- difficulties in the maintenance or replacement of some equipment and materials;
- problems in implementation associated with original program design; and
- other problems associated with implementation.

Problems involved in teacher dependent equipment programs

Several principals spoke of problems concerned with teacher dependent programs and the difficulties which they had experienced when a teacher left the school because of transfer or some other reason. These programs included those requiring specialist teaching assistance and those that held the interest of only one teacher or group of teachers in the school. The quotes below exemplify the problems discussed by some principals:

It seemed to be successful when (the teacher) was here — someone who was oriented towards geography . . . I think perhaps it depended upon one man . . . I think we have to live with the staffing situation — very often, the people who get promotion are the very people who get programs going (re environmental program).

The orchestral program depends upon one teacher. If she were transferred tomorrow, I would fear that the orchestra could go down the drain a wee bit — we'd be then relying very heavily on community involvement.

It did start off very well, but gradually, the community input waned and the teachers realised that a lot of school time was being used. There's a lot of equipment in the store room . . . when you have program teachers transferred with different interests, the program wanes . . . (re recreation club).

In speaking to some principals, it was found that they had overcome this problem because of the availability of other teachers or community people who were interested and capable of continuing programs. Several principals were conscious of the need to ensure continuation

I feel strongly about the sophisticated valuable equipment. Sometimes somebody applies for this equipment and then, when the person goes, it fizzles — that's why we're going to in-service every teacher (in the use of a video camera and VCR.)

In summary, then, while some principals had taken steps to ensure continuity of programs, there was evidence to suggest that some programs were not able to be implemented satisfactorily because of the transfer or non-availability of personnel.

Problems of the non-continuity of personnel employed through the Scheme

All additional personnel employed through school initiated programs are employed for a maximum of one-half year only. Subject to the availability of funds and the success of the program, the employment of persons may be extended but there is no guarantee of this.

In two of the schools where additional personnel had been employed through the Scheme, difficulties were reported with non-continuity. In one school, for example, a program employing a music tutor was about to be discontinued. The principal stated:

When the tutor goes, the program will fall flat on its face — it's just not going to work.

In another school, the possibility of non-continuity of employment for personnel had affected their program choice:

We're not going to start instrumental tutoring if in six months time, the funding drops off.

One teacher expressed the problem of non-continuity in this manner:

Parents are sitting eagerly waiting to see what happens . . . Should they start a program with the view that it might only be a six month thing? I think they should be given a life . . . It creates something. But . . . does it keep going at that level? Nobody wants to go backwards.

Difficulties in the maintenance or replacement of some equipment and materials

Whereas SPSS provides the initial funding for equipment and materials programs, the responsibility for maintenance or replacement usually lies with schools. The only exception is some AV equipment which is maintained by Production Services in Brisbane.

A perusal of the results of the observation schedule in Section 4.1 shows that, overall, equipment and materials had been maintained to the extent that most were observed to be in good or excellent condition. While this is so, examples were reported by three teachers and one principal where the cost of maintenance or replacement had become prohibitive.

The three teachers saw problems in continuing their programs because of the *costs* involved:

> A problem is coming up in terms of the replacement of our tents. The small tents have been up for twenty-six camps. Maintenance and replacement is going to be our problem from now on.

> A difficulty I've seen is that there was no consideration of the on-going costs especially with the electric typewriters, their contracts and so on.

> I'm in a cleft stick at the moment. Repairs are expensive. You run stalls but that rather irks me because I spend all of one day, say two days a month, working on the school boats. Why the heck should I go out and run cake stalls as well to support it? If I don't, nobody does. The insurance of the boat I really feel is not my responsibility. I feel it's not my responsibility. I feel it should be the State's or the funding group. To raise money I have to hire the boats out. Some people give me ten dollars. Some don't give me a brass razoo. But in using it, they're causing further damage. If I keep them just for the children, I can't pay for the maintenance.

One principal expressed a similar concern:

> The Club has just run a raffle, but there are so many poor families. You can't expect them to buy too many raffle tickets. Fund raising is a real problem around here. There's no real outlet . . . there's no pub to run a raffle.

Apart from the *cost* of maintenance, two principals spoke also of the reliability of some AV equipment in the North Queensland climate. One principal stated:

> Although the equipment has upgraded the school, there seems to be some problems with the equipment that we've been supplied with — it's probably the very nature of AV equipment.

Another principal was more specific:

> VCRs hate moisture and one of the tapes got stuck to the heads. I had to send it away (for maintenance) the other day.

Problems in implementation associated with original program design

Several principals spoke of problems in implementation which could be traced back to the original program design.

One principal reported that part of an equipment program had been unsuccessful because the wrong kind of cassette player had been requested by the submission writer.

Principals at two schools each spoke of a program in which one of the major aims had been over-optimistic and unrealistic. This aim had been connected with getting Aboriginals and white people together more. The aim had failed. In one program, the school ' had never really got the parent backing ' and in the other school, the activity associated with the program apparently had been the wrong choice.

Another principal spoke of difficulties associated with the reliance on volunteer labour to construct an adventure playground. The principal stated that this problem had arisen before his appointment to the school:

> The original program envisaged the purchase of the material, and labour was to be provided by the workforce of parents. They had two working bees and got the foundations in — three parents — and then it just died. The equipment was stored here for three years.

Eventually, the playground had to be completed at an 'exorbitant' price by a contractor.

Other problems associated with implementation

Three principals spoke of other problems not already mentioned.

One principal spoke of sporting materials which had not been used. He felt that ' if it had been put into a classroom program, it would have been used every day '. For various reasons, this action had not been taken.

A second principal discussed problems which had occurred with camping equipment used in a school network system. He stated, ' the only thing that we have to be cautious with is camping gear — to make sure that the gear comes back in good order '.

Lastly, one principal spoke of difficulties which he was having in implementing a photography program. This principal had to call a photography program to a halt because of lack of space in the school. The photography darkroom had been converted into the principal's office!

Summary

In summarising Section 4.2, the following point may be noted.

1. While principals and teachers felt that the operation of special programs within their schools had been successful, attention was drawn to problems which had marred the success of some programs. The most frequently discussed problems were associated with teacher dependent equipment programs, the non-continuity of personnel employed through special programs, difficulties with the maintenance or replacement of some equipment and materials, and difficulties with the original design of some programs.

4.3 THE SUCCESS OF SYSTEMS INITIATED FUNDING

While 85 per cent of the Section's time is spent on the processing of school initiated programs, these programs only account for approximately 35 per cent of the Special Programs' annual budget. The remainder of the budget is spent on programs that have been initiated at the systems level. As reported earlier, systems initiated funding is spent in the following ways: (i) additional aide entitlement (approximately 60 per cent of total annual budget); and (ii) other systems level funding (up to approximately five per cent of the total annual budget). Opinions on these two aspects are reported below.

Opinions on the additional aide entitlement

Principals were asked their opinions on the ways their special program teacher aides had contributed to the running of the school. In most schools, the answers came without hesitation, in a form similar to ' terrific, terrific '; ' she's marvellous '; ' very important '; ' it's good '; or ' extremely beneficial '.

In primary schools, SPSS funded teacher aides were used in a variety of ways including the preparation of stencils, duplicating materials, charts, etc., but the majority of the time was spent on direct contact with the children. One principal, for example, answered ' I see the role of the aide as more of a children's aide than a teachers' aide '. Another principal stated, ' Any extra time you can get for aides helps tremendously in the running of the school. They're mostly involved in interaction with the children. '

In secondary schools, SPSS funded teacher aides were mainly used in preparation or maintenance type tasks. For example, one principal answered, ' Aides work very hard by contributing chiefly to organising materials, lists, etc. '

Opinions on other systems initiated funding

In the schools included in this evaluation, there were several schools that had received other systems initiated funding. The prominent example was the video recording equipment supplied to the small Class 4 and 5 primary schools. This systems supplement had enabled these schools to receive programs on the Remote Area Video Scheme. Once again, the responses from principals were very positive and appreciative, although in several instances, there had been maintenance problems (discussed previously in Section 4.3). One principal also complained that the chosen video format had prevented him from showing community recreational video movies in addition to educational programs.

Summary

In summarising Section 4.3, the following points may be noted.

1. In general, principals were very appreciative of the additional aide time that had been given them by SPSS.
2. The major area of activity for teacher aides in primary schools was class contact, while in secondary schools it was preparation and maintenance type activities.
3. Other systems initiated funding which was encountered in our school visits had also been welcomed and had been found by principals to be beneficial.

4.4 PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH SYSTEMS INITIATED FUNDING

While reactions to systems initiated programs were most positive, principals revealed a concern over the additional aide time allocation. This concern was not related to how successful or helpful they felt the additional aide time had been, but to the possible 'loss' of aide time due to possible changes in funding arrangements or to their being deleted from the Scheme. Similar to school initiated personnel programs, the loss of aide time would create problems in terms of continuity of the overall school program.

To ascertain the priority of this concern, principals' opinions were sought on what would be the effect on their schools if SPSS funding were to cease. There were some idiosyncratic responses

but most of the 22 principals discussing the question spoke of the loss of personnel and excursions. Principals in five schools drew attention to the curtailing or cancelling of school excursions, but the most frequently mentioned 'loss' (felt by 11 principals) was in the area of personnel.

> If we lost our aide time, there would be a necessity for restructuring; a reallocation of duties — that would be the most serious blow to this school.

In examining principals' opinions on the loss of special program personnel, perhaps special attention should be given to what additional aide time means to principals in one-teacher schools. The impression was that the greatest loss would be felt in these schools. For example, one of the more descriptive small school principals stated:

> (The loss of the aide time) would have massive implications for the school I suppose. I'd probably have a nervous breakdown in no time flat because I really couldn't see me operating without it. We could get by without a video but as far as the aide goes, she's vital.

Summary

In summarising Section 4.4, the following point may be made.

1. While principals felt that present systems initiated programs were most beneficial, concern was expressed over potential difficulties that could occur in the event of 'loss' of SPSS additional aide time.

4.5 SYSTEMS INITIATED FUNDING VS SCHOOL INITIATED FUNDING

In view of the opinions expressed in the previous sections, it was of interest to ascertain school opinions concerning the kind of funding that was favoured — systems or school initiated funding. This is an important question because it not only refers to funding directly but to the overall philosophy of the SPSS. Does the philosophy of school initiated funding justify the spending of the vast majority of time on it by the Committee? Alternatively, should there be almost twice as much money spent on systems initiated funding as is spent on school initiated funding? To illuminate these questions, principals were asked what kinds of funding they favoured.

In their responses, it was found that principals in seven (approximately one-third) of the 23 schools where the subject was discussed, felt that school initiated programs were most important. One principal probably put the reason most succinctly:

> I think I'd prefer school initiated funding because the school is closer to the pulse.

Principals in a further eight (approximately one-third) schools also tended to favour school initiated programs, although they qualified this opinion by stating that the teacher aide part of systems funding was still very beneficial. A typical response appears below.

> I can see a lot of good in systems initiated funding especially where it concerns the teacher aide, but really I'm more in favour of school initiated funding because I can put across what I consider to be the main need of the school.

In the remaining one-third of schools, principals answered that both kinds of funding were beneficial:

> You'd have to have a combination of both — with school initiated funding, there are different situations for each school; and with systems initiated funding, it's an easy way of getting the common things.

In order to gain a greater understanding of principals' opinions on funding, they were asked whether or not there should be a change in the 'systems — schools' balance. An analysis of the interview data shows that those two-thirds of principals who favoured school initiated programs (with or without qualification) were fairly evenly divided between the opinion that there should be more funding for school initiated programs and the opinion that the present balance was satisfactory. With the one-third of principals who saw advantages in both types of funding, most expressed the opinion that there should be more funding for systems initiated programs, either more general aide time or a systems supply of equipment and materials commonly required by schools.

Summary

In summarising Section 4.5, the following points may be noted.

1. Principals in approximately two-thirds of schools tended to favour school initiated programs, although about half of these principals spoke also of the benefits of systems funded teacher aides. The remaining one-third of principals tended to favour both schools and systems initiated funding.
2. Principals favouring 'school initiated' programs (two-thirds of total) were fairly evenly divided between favouring an increase in school initiated funding and keeping the present 'schools — systems' balance. On the other hand, those principals favouring both funding procedures (one-third of total) tended to opt for more systems initiated funding.

4.6 THE CHARACTERISTICS OF A 'GOOD' SPSS PROGRAM

In the previous sections it was found that while certain programs had their problems, most of them had been considered to be successful. In stating their reason for the success of various programs, most principals and teachers discussed points that were specific to individual programs.

While this specificity is important, it was of interest to investigate more general matters that might contribute to answering the question:

> What *is* a good SPSS program?

Of course, this question could be answered by referring to programs that did not exhibit any of the problems discussed previously. Such programs would probably be more likely to be better programs than those which did exhibit these problems. This section, however, attempts a positive response by looking for both specific program types which might work better than others, and also general criteria that might be applied to successful programs.

The relative merit of different program types

An attempt was made first of all to ascertain what types of programs tended to be more successful than others (e.g. personnel, community, equipment, excursion programs). This was a most difficult

task. For a start, only principals were qualified to give an opinion on the topic. This is because teachers were mainly involved only in their own particular programs and therefore were not qualified to make a judgment on other SPSS programs operating in the school. Indeed some teachers, especially those in secondary schools, were not aware of the total SPSS school involvement. Principals on the other hand, were more likely to have an overall picture of the number and types of programs operating in schools.

In considering the relative merit of different program types, it became clear that there were as many different responses as there were schools included in the Phase II study. There were principals who were unable to differentiate between programs. There were other principals who spoke of successful programs that centred upon the classroom, and still others who felt that extra curricula programs had worked well. Community involvement programs were also mentioned by some. In essence, it was impossible to draw any strong conclusions concerning what is a good or successful program type. Indeed, special programs were fairly idiosyncratic and they fulfilled a particular purpose at a particular school for a particular time. They were not generalisable.

While this is so, there is one aspect of program success which is generalisable. It is not based so much on the program types themselves but on what may be regarded as a prerequisite to success. It was the researchers' observation that, regardless of program type, the major prerequisite to a successful 'quality' program is the quality of those involved — the enthusiasm, talent, energy and compliance of selectors, planners and implementors. This conclusion is certainly not startling. Its very common sense, however, could easily be overlooked when viewing program success.

No general conclusions may be made concerning desirable program types but the following sample of comments is included to convey the way in which various principals expressed their preference. These responses indicate an idea of the positive quality of the special program experience at the school level:

I prefer programs where more personnel are put in front of the kiddies, because this is a school . . . where I don't think there's been a lot of communication.

I think basically the art/craft program was the most successful because it involved the community as well and it still does.

I would say the music submissions. We've now had two musicals — music has jumped up in popularity.

The AV equipment, because it has opened up the world of those children who have never left the town; also, the use of books with the special program aide in the library.

Any program to do with sport — that's our big carrot to dangle in front of them, to get them to school — absenteeism is one of the big problems here.

Programs that are personal to the school — things like an adventure playground, a multi-purpose type thing. Also, the video and excursions, being like windows for the school . . . The children feel that the world revolves around (this small town) and it certainly doesn't.

I'd say that the programs that are most successful are the ones that the children use in the school itself, e.g. music instruments, tennis court.

Criteria for judging the effect of programs

Both principals and teachers were asked their opinions on what kinds of criteria should be applied when judging the effects of programs. Principals' and teachers' opinions are reported separately.

Principals in 22 schools had the opportunity to respond to this question and many different answers resulted. Most responses, however, centred upon how children in their schools could be assisted, and to a lesser extent, the community.

It is interesting to note how broad were the criteria of most principals. These criteria were given differing emphases from school to school, but included motivation factors, attitudes to schools, enrichment aspects, and skill development.

> I think it's enrichment for people who wouldn't get it otherwise. I think that's the thing we're looking for. Kids in an area like this are deprived of all kinds of things (re enrichment).

> The programs are there to assist the children — raising the image of the school; by also giving the kids a good self-image of themselves . . . We're getting into school competitions and winning them — people are asking what the hell's going on? We're supposed to be the dregs of the bloody place! (re motivation and self-image).

> I'm looking for the benefit of the kids — how things fit into curricula; how it benefits their learning processes; and besides the curriculum, we've got to look at social development, and cultural identity (re curricula and social development).

> Two criteria — bringing the community in; and the actual schoolwork — skills from leatherwork, etc. I should say just schoolwork, but I think the involvement of people coming into the school is probably as beneficial as the actual schoolwork (re community involvement and children's skills).

The quotes above are examples of the responses of most principals concerning what kind of criteria should be applied when judging the effect of programs. It can be seen that these criteria are fairly broadly based. Indeed, it is interesting to note that only three principals concentrated solely on the basic skills, academic success and general school curriculum based education. These responses are interesting and are printed below:

> Everyone is seeing school now in terms of maths and reading standards whereas seven years ago, people were looking for overall educational experiences fitting into academic skills a bit more.

> I'd say the school based ones are going to become more important. Somehow, we've got to do something about the academic progress of children at the school. We have illiterate children going into high school. That's tragic . . .

> (Our programs) tend to be drafted off into the areas of the slow achiever . . . I want the children to be able to write a letter, look up a telephone book, make a sensible phone call, do the ordinary everyday matters.

The responses from *teachers* were similar to principals but directed more to the programs with which they were specifically involved. This topic was discussed in 31 teacher interviews and responses were mainly concerned with the practical impact of programs on students.

Some teachers spoke of more than one criterion. Looking at the most frequent responses, in 13 (approximately two-fifths) of the 31 interviews, teachers included aspects of student achievement expressed in terms of the acquisition of specific skills and knowledge. In 10 interviews (approximately one-third), teachers discussed student interest, enjoyment and improved attitudes. In seven interviews (approximately one-quarter), a very practical criterion for success was discussed, namely, whether or not equipment and materials had been used. Finally, in six interviews (approximately one-fifth), a vocational orientation was thought to be desired. Below are presented several examples of teachers' responses in the various areas of interest:

> It's geared to what the students get out of it; Whether you think their reading has improved; Overall consolidation of his ability to play a tune (re student achievement).

> Whether they're enjoying it, if you've got a positive attitude (from students), then it's working; Instill in the children a love of music, not only popular but classical music (re student interest, enjoyment, attitudes).

> Whether the equipment could be used to an extent where it would warrant the outlay; Is it being used? (re use of equipment).

> Hopefully, improved job prospects; The social awareness thing — computer awareness; The aim was to familiarise the students with what's done about the school (re vocational orientation).

Summary

In summarising Section 4.6, the following points may be noted.

1. Principals and teachers tended to characterise a 'good' SPSS program as one which satisfied fairly broad criteria such as motivational factors; student interest; increased enjoyment and improved attitudes; enrichment aspects and improved skill development.
2. In investigating what is a good SPSS program, it was found that it was inappropriate to define a desirable program in terms of any particular program type (excursions, personnel, community, equipment programs, etc.) Special programs were fairly idiosyncratic and they fulfilled a particular purpose at a particular school for a particular time. Rather than program type, a better indication of success was the quality of the personnel involved in the program.

4.7 DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

(See Summary of conclusions and recommendations on page 65)

This chapter has concentrated on an evaluation of SPSS programs by gauging perceptions of their implementation in schools. The approach has been to examine both school initiated and systems initiated programs by trying to capture principals', teachers' and, where applicable, community impressions of both the success and difficulties associated with the various programs.

The summary statements at the end of each section reveal several major themes running through the chapter. These themes are discussed under the following headings:

- systems and school initiated programs;
- the quality of the SPSS experience;
- the direction of the SPSS experience.

After considering these aspects, the section ends with a summary of conclusions and recommendations arising from the findings outlined in Chapter 4.

Systems and school initiated programs

In discussing the dualistic 'school — systems' nature of funding origins, there are two questions that spring to mind.

- Is it justifiable to spend approximately 85 per cent of the SPSS Section's time on school initiated programs which account for only 35 per cent of the SPSS budget?
- Should school initiated programs amount to only 35 per cent of the SPSS budget?

In answering the first question, there is no doubt from the interviews that most principals were in favour of programs initiated at the school level. For example, there was not one principal who opted solely for systems initiated funding. Viewed in this light, the amount of time spent on the processing of school initiated programs does appear to be justified.

Turning to the second question, on the surface it could be concluded that given its popularity, school initiated funding should deserve a larger slice of the budgetry cake. When we examine the opinions of principals, however, no such conclusion can be drawn. It was found that one third of principals tended to favour more school initiated funding, one third felt that there should be more systems funding and a final third were happy with the present balance. Such a finding provides no real basis for action either way.

To look closer at this issue, it is necessary to take cognisance of principals' opinions on systems initiated funding. Where systems initiated programs spelt additional teacher aide time, most principals had nothing but praise for this funding facet. Indeed, it was found that the loss of aide time would be felt severely by many schools.

Summarising this issue, it comes down to the general impressions received throughout the interviews — most principals really wanted the best of both worlds. They wanted to be in control of their own funding destiny (schools initiated) but they also felt that the systems initiated additional teacher aide time had been successful and, therefore, they desired its continuation. Accordingly, there doesn't appear to be much reason to change the overall balance between school and systems initiated funding. Here is an area where the 'status quo' could provide the answer.

The quality of the SPSS experience

In examining this aspect, the first point to be noted is that the quality of any one individual program appeared to be very much dependent on the quality of the personnel involved in the program. This aspect is a common sense notion but should not be overlooked when judging the potential of a submission's likely success.

Another important conclusion from the findings was that any attempt to judge the quality of submissions according to program type would probably not be very illuminating. The finding that it was not possible to draw any conclusions regarding what types of programs tended to be more successful than others may be viewed as a positive one. It is probably to the merit of SPSS that the answering of this question was such a difficult task. The fact that so many programs are initiated at the school level guarantees a diversity of ideas for overcoming one or more of the four areas of disadvantage. The diversity is not generalisable and transferable across time, school or population.

The above points notwithstanding, the evaluation did yield some idea of the overall quality of the SPSS experience in schools and this quality was communicated by the use of quotes from the tapes of interviews.

An analysis of these findings suggests that, overall, the experience of SPSS programs in schools was generally of good quality. Certainly the majority of principals and teachers felt that most of their programs had been successful, and there were also other indicators to inform such a conclusion. First, the findings showed how principals and teachers felt about their SPSS programs improving the school environment in various ways, especially in relation to children. Second, the majority of teachers felt that they themselves had benefited from SPSS. Finally, the observation of equipment and materials revealed that SPSS equipment and materials was generally in good condition and had been used often — all indicators of the good quality of the SPSS experience.

Of course, there were problems that marred the quality of the SPSS experience in some schools and these have been documented in Sections 4.2 and 4.4. They included difficulties with teacher dependent equipment programs; the non-continuity of personnel employed through the Scheme; difficulties in the maintenance or replacement of some equipment and materials; and problems with the original program designs. These blemishes in quality should be examined by the SPSS Advisory Committee.

The direction of the SPSS experience

With the overall conclusion that the general quality of the SPSS program experience was *good*, it is important to establish the *direction* of that quality. This direction will be considered by comparing the desired criteria of principals and teachers with the objectives of the Special Program Schools Scheme.

It will be recalled from the Introduction that the objectives of the scheme outlined by the SPSS Committee are as follows:

(i) to promote equality of opportunity so that all children should be assisted to gain the fundamental skills necessary to participate fully and equally in society and have the opportunity to share in its culture;
(ii) to provide an enjoyable and fruitful schooling that is meaningful and satisfying in itself, not merely a preparation for later life; and
(iii) to allow schools to interact with their communities so that they become 'open' institutions.

Looking at the findings from the school interviews, it will have been noted that principals' and teachers' criteria for success included motivational factors, attitudes to school, enrichment aspects and the acquisition of skill and knowledge. These criteria are examined by looking at each of the Scheme's objectives in turn:

Objective (i): 'to promote equality of opportunity so that all children should be assisted to gain the fundamental skills necessary to participate fully and equally in society and have the opportunity to share in its culture '. it can be argued that the criteria thought important by school personnel are compatible with this objective. There is, however, a conditional question that remains, namely, what is meant by ' fundamental skills '? Teachers, for example, discussed a variety of skills and knowledge acquisition. If ' fundamental ' skills are meant to denote the basic skills of literacy and numeracy, then the implication would be that not all principals and teachers were concerned with achieving objective (i) to the letter.

Objective (ii): 'to provide an enjoyable and fruitful schooling that is meaningful and satisfying in itself, not merely a preparation for later life '. It is probably true to say that objective (ii) best fits the criteria of the majority of principals and teachers. This objective would appear to be uppermost in their minds when implementing SPSS programs.

Objective (iii): 'to allow schools to interact with their communities so that they become 'open' institutions '. Probably the greatest qualification hovers over this objective. It is doubtful whether there was a general implementation of this objective. By way of illustration, it will be recalled that the major contributors to the selection, preparation and implementation of SPSS programs were school personnel. It was also found that some programs were most dependent on individual teachers.

Not surprisingly, perhaps, community involvement appeared to work best in 'out of school' activities such as tennis or camping clubs or in curriculum areas such as music, art and craft, and physical education. From our observations, it is debatable how much more community involvement SPSS can expect in all the curriculum areas. In high schools, the curriculum content is usually complex and in primary schools, classroom organisation and teaching method and technology has become more specialised. Both areas often preclude greater community involvement. It is probable that this problem starts right at the program selection stage, continues through program planning only to naturally limit a community contribution to program implementation. Results in Chapter 2, for example, showed that SPSS objective (iii) was not uppermost in the minds of many submission writers.

In summary, then, there were certainly fine examples of community participation in a few programs. Overall, however, it would appear that there was only a limited application of the SPSS objective 'to allow schools to interact with their communities so that they become 'open' institutions. This aspect should be examined by the Advisory Committee.

Summary of conclusions and recommendations

In examining the findings of Chapter 4 on SPSS programs in schools, this evaluation reaches the following conclusions and recommendations.

Systems and school initiated programs:

1. Although systems initiated additional aide time utilises a high proportion of the annual SPSS budget, the positive response from principals indicates that this part of systems initiated funding should be retained.
2. Although a large proportion of the SPSS section's time is spent on school initiated programs which account for only 35 per cent of the SPSS budget, the popularity of this type of funding would appear to justify the amount of time invested in it by SPSS and therefore it should be retained.
3. In considering the variety of opinions expressed by principals, there does not appear to be any significant argument to change the present balance of systems and schools initiated funding.

Quality of the SPSS experience:

4. Any review of the Scheme should be made within the context that the experience of SPSS programs in schools was of good quality. Some indicators of the good quality include the generally positive response from principals and teachers concerning how SPSS programs had improved the school milieu; the positive benefits accrued by teachers involved in SPSS

programs; the generally good condition and regular use of SPSS funded equipment; and the majority opinion that most SPSS programs had worked successfully.

5. The above point notwithstanding, an examination should be made of the problems associated with various SPSS programs. These problems included difficulties with teacher dependent equipment programs; the non-continuity of personnel employed through the Scheme; difficulties in the maintenance or replacement of some equipment and materials; and problems with the original program designs.
6. The quality of SPSS programs should not be judged according to what type of program is operating (equipment and materials; personnel; and excursions, etc.)
7. The quality of personnel involved in SPSS programs should not be overlooked when estimating a program's potential for success.

Direction of the SPSS experience:

8. A review should be made of how SPSS programs in schools achieve the general objectives of the Scheme. In this respect, it should be noted that the direction of the SPSS experience in schools appeared to best fit objective (ii): ' to provide an enjoyable and fruitful schooling that is meaningful and satisfying in itself, not merely a preparation for later life '. To a lesser extent, objective (i) was satisfied: ' assisting children to gain fundamental skills necessary to participate fully and equally in society and have the opportunity to share in its culture '. Despite notable exceptions, it is doubtful that there is a general implementation of objective (iii): ' to allow schools to interact with their communities so that they become 'open' institutions '.

5. GUIDELINES FOR REVIEW

This report has presented the results of a 1981-82 evaluation of the Special Program Schools Scheme, undertaken by the Research Branch, Department of Education, Queensland. The evaluation did not focus on either the intrinsic merits of the scheme's goals or its underlying ideological construction, equality of educational opportunity. Rather, its direction was more functionally based; the purpose being to provide both descriptive and evaluative information to the SPSS Advisory Committee to facilitate the improvement of the Scheme, especially as it affects the delivery end of the system — the schools themselves.

In fulfilling this purpose, the relevant summaries, conclusions and recommendations have been presented already in Sections 2.4, 3.11 and 4.7. The remaining task of this report is to draw this information together and to provide brief guidelines which may be used by the SPSS Advisory Committee in any ongoing review of the Scheme.

In examining the results of the evaluation, it can be seen that there are three major areas for review:

- a review of what the Scheme requires of schools;
- a review of the Scheme's organisational procedures; and
- a review of the Scheme's function in schools.

First, the evaluation offers guidelines for a review of what the Scheme requires of schools if they are to become fully involved in the Scheme. Important aspects for review may be found in the evaluation's summary of conclusions and recommendations occurring under the following headings: *submission planning and preparation guidelines; the program evaluation requirements;* and *community involvement guidelines.* (See Section 3.11 for details.)

Second, the evaluation offers guidelines for a review of how the SPSS Task Force organises and administers the Scheme. Aspects for review in this area may be found in the evaluation's summary of conclusions and recommendations occurring under the following headings: *school eligibility; submitting, processing and supplying programs;* and *communication between the section and schools.* (See Section 3.11 for details.)

Thirdly, the evaluation offers guidelines for a review of what kind of function SPSS has played in Queensland schools in the past and what direction that function could take in the future.

Useful input for a review in this area may first of all be found in the descriptive phase of the evaluation. This phase was not evaluative in itself, but it does allow insights into the functional results of decision making in the past. Summary statistical information on such aspects as approval rates, funding patterns, types of programs funded, etc. may also be useful in determining any future changes in the function of the Scheme at the school level. (See Section 2.4 for summary of statistics.)

As well as the summary statistical information, other aspects for a review of the function of SPSS in schools may be found in the evaluation's summary of conclusions and recommendations occurring under the following headings: *systems and school initiated programs; the quality of the SPSS experience;* and *the directions of the SPSS experience.* (See Section 4.7 for details.)

In conclusion, this evaluation offers guidelines for a review of the Special Program Schools Scheme in three major areas: what the Scheme requires of schools; the scheme's organisational procedures; and the function of the Scheme in schools. In offering these guidelines, it is hoped that the 1981-82 evaluation will be helpful to the Advisory Committee, especially in respect to those decisions that will effect improvements to the Scheme at the school level.

Columns 1–6

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APPENDIX 1 SPSS EVALUATION – PHASE I PROFORMA

BACKGROUND DATA	COLUMN	VALUE GUIDE
1. School Number/Name	7-9	Name:_____
2. School Type	10	1. Pre-School/Primary 2. Secondary 3. Primary/Secondary Department
3. School SPSSQ Status	11	1. Current member SPSSQ 2. Deleted 1979 3. Deleted 1980 4. Deleted 1981
4. School Region	12	1. BN 2. BS 3. BW 4. N 5. C 6. WB 7. DD 8. SW 9. NW
5. School Enrolment	13-16	
6. Number Classroom Teachers	17-19	
7. Number Specialist Teachers	20-21	
8. Program designed to Combat		
SEL	22	1. Yes 2. No
MIGRANCY	23	1. Yes 2. No
ABORIGINALITY	24	1. Yes 2. No
ISOLATION	25	1. Yes 2. No
9. Level of parent/community involvement in Program	26	1. Highly Involved 2. Some Involvement 3. Uninvolved
10. Program Approval Rating	27	1. Approve 2. Not approve 3. Partly Approve
11. Program Approval Date	28	1. 1979 1st Sem 2. 1979 2nd Sem 3. 1980 1st Sem 4. 1980 2nd Sem 5. 1981 1st Sem 6. 1981 2nd Sem
12. Program Status	29	1. Continuation 1 2. Cont. 2 3. Cont. 3 4. Cont. 4 5. Cont. 5 6. Cont. 6 7. Cont. 7 8. Cont. 8 + 9. New
13. Total Program Value	30-34	
14. Program Value Breakdown		
EQUIPMENT AND MATERIALS	35-39	
PERSONNEL	40-44	
EXCURSIONS	45-49	
SYSTEMS	50-54	
OTHER	55-59	

Columns 1–6

	2

FUNDING TYPE (The funding is for . . .)	COLUMN
1. EQUIPMENT AND MATERIALS	7
• Classroom Curriculum Equipment and Materials	8
• Kits/Schemes	9
• Books	10
• Other Curriculum Material	11
• School Library Equipment and Materials	12
• Books and Other Printed Material	13
• Other library (excluding A-V)	14
• Audio-Visual (Reception)	15
• TV/Monitor	16
• VCR	17
• Film Projector	18
• Slide Projector	19
• Audio Reception	20
• Other AV Reception	21
• Audio-Visual (Expression)	22
• TV Camera/s (+)	23
• Movie Camera/s (+)	24
• Still Camera/s (+)	25
• Dark Room	26
• Audio Production	27
• Other AV expression	28
• Reprographics	29
• Computing	30
• Hardware	31
• Software	32
• Capital	33
• Adventure Playground	34
• Sports Facilities Improvements	35
• Other Schoolground Improvements	37
• Buildings (new)	38
• Other Capital	39
• Outdoors Equipment	40
• Camping Equipment	41
• Sporting Equipment	42
• Other Outdoors	43
• Other Equipment and Materials	44
• Leisure Arts	45
• Classroom Beautification	46
• Functional	47
•	48
•	49

FUNDING TYPE (The funding is for . . .)	COLUMN
2. PERSONNEL	50
• Supply B	51
• Classroom Replacement	52
• General Teacher in Program	53
• Teacher in Specialist Program	54
• Aide/s (for)	55
• General Classroom	56
• Library	57
• Remedial/At Risk	58
• Home/School Liaison	59
• Childcare	60
• Other	61
• Tutor/s	62
• Other Personnel	63
3. EXCURSIONS	64
• (up to) 1 day (no overnight)	65
• 2 days	66
• 3 days	67
• 4 days	68
• 5 days	69
• 6 days	70
• 7 days	71
• 7-14 days	72
• over two weeks	73
4. SYSTEMS	74
•	75
5. OTHER	76
•	77

Columns 1–6

1	2	3	4	5	6
		■			

FUNDING BENEFICIARIES (The funded program proposes to benefit . . .)	COLUMN
1. STUDENTS	7
Types	
• General	8
• Special (Remedial, Handicapped, etc.)	9
Levels	
• Whole School	10
• Pre-School	11
• Year Level 1	12
• Year Level 2	13
• Year Level 3	14
• Year Level 4	15
• Year Level 5	16
• Year Level 6	17
• Year Level 7	18
• Year Level 8	19
• Year Level 9	20
• Year Level 10	21
• Year Level 11	22
• Year Level 12	23
2. TEACHERS	24
3. LOCAL COMMUNITY	25
4. OTHER SCHOOLS	26
5. OTHER	27

FUNDING FOCUS (The funded program proposes to focus on . . .)	COLUMN
1. REMEDIAL PROGRAMS	28
• Language Development	29
• Reading/Literacy	30
• Mathematics/Numeracy	31
• Other	32
2. CURRICULUM ENRICHMENT	33
• General Curriculum	34
• Language Arts/English (Reading)	35
• Language Arts/English (Other)	36
• Mathematics	37
• Science	38
• Social Science/Studies	39
• Music	40
• Art/Craft	41
• Physical Education	42
• Health	43
• Other	44
3. EXTRA CLASSROOM/CURRICULA	45
• Sport (Individual)	46
• Sport (Team)	47
• Hobbies/Interests (Individual Nature)	48
• Hobbies/Interests (Social Nature)	49
• Social Recreational Development	50
• Other	51
4. COMMUNITY SUPPORT	52
• Home/School Liaison	53
• Childcare	54
• Other	55
5. OTHER	56

FUNDING OUTCOMES (The funded program proposes to . . .)	COLUMN
1. INCREASE EQUALITY OF ACCESS TO ACHIEVEMENT IN CURRICULUM AREA/S	57
2. INCREASE EQUALITY OF ACCESS TO A WIDER VARIETY OF LIFE EXPERIENCES	58
• 'Local' Cultural Reception	59
• 'Local' Cultural/Recreational Activity	60
• 'Outside' Cultural Reception	61
• 'Outside' Cultural/Recreational Activity	62
3. IMPROVE SCHOOLING SO THAT IT WILL BE MORE ENJOYABLE AND MEANINGFUL IN ITSELF, NOT MERELY A PREPARATION FOR LATER LIFE. IN PARTICULAR, IMPROVE . . .	63
• Physical Environment for Schooling	64
• Psychological Environment for Schooling	65
• Student Self-concept	66
• Student Attitudes to Schooling	67
• Sociological Environment for Schooling	68
• Teacher/Student Relationships	69
• Student/Student Relationships	70
4. IMPROVE SCHOOL OPENNESS	71
• School/Home Social Interaction	72
• School/Home Educational Interaction	73
• School/Organisations Interaction	74
• School/Work Interaction	75
• School/School Interaction	76
• Community/School Extension	77
5. OTHER	78

APPENDIX 2

PHASE II SCHOOL SELECTION PROCEDURES

In selecting the 25 SPSS schools to be visited during Phase II of the evaluation, two important variables for consideration were the three *school types* and the five *school sizes*. A 5 x 3 matrix table was therefore drawn up showing the distribution of current SPSS schools (N=199) according to these two variables. The 25 schools to be selected for Phase II were then distributed proportionately to each cell of the table so as to be representative of the total number of schools on the Scheme. An examination of this table showed that such a strict proportion of distribution did not provide the sample with a sufficient number of secondary schools and primary schools with secondary departments. An increased weighting was therefore given to these schools. Table A shows both the proportional (P) and weighted (W) distribution of the 25 Phase II SPSS schools according to school type and school size.

Table A: Proportional (P) and weighted (W) distribution of 25 Phase II SPSS schools according to school size and school type

School Type / School Size	Number of Primary Schools		Number of Secondary Schools		Number of Primary Schools with Secondary Depts		TOTAL	
	P	W	P	W	P	W	P	W
1 (> 600 pupils)	2	0	1	3	–	–	3	3
2 (301 – 600)	3	3	0	0	0	2	3	5
3 (101 – 300)	4	4	1	1	2	2	7	7
4 (36 – 100)	5	4	–	–	–	–	5	4
5 (< 36)	7	6	–	–	–	–	7	6
TOTAL	21	17	2	4	2	4	25	25

Using the weighted (W) column of the above table as a guide, specific schools were selected by the evaluators in close consultation with the Co-ordinator of SPSS. The schools were selected with due consideration to geographical location, the number and types of programs in the schools and the experience of principals in the Scheme.

Geographical location was the first major consideration. In selecting schools, metropolitan, near metropolitan and country schools were included, taking in six of the nine education regions in

Queensland. List 1 below shows the names of the selected schools, together with their class and geographical location.

LIST 1: Visited schools — Phase II

SCHOOL	CLASS	REGION
Primary		
Bribie Island	2	Brisbane North
Mossman	2	Northern
Garbutt	2	Northern
Dunwich	3	Brisbane South
Lota	3	Brisbane South
Gympie East	3	Wide Bay
Cherbourg	3	Wide Bay
Laidley Central	4	Brisbane West
Chillagoe	4	Northern
Murray River Upper	4	Northern
Kennedy	4	Northern
Almaden	5	Northern
Petford	5	Northern
Daradgee	5	Northern
Running River	5	Northern
Mingela	5	Northern
Ravenswood	5	Northern
Secondary		
Woodridge	1	Brisbane South
Sandgate	1	Brisbane North
Bundamba	1	Brisbane West
Mossman	2*	Northern
Primary with Secondary Department		
Yarrabah	2	Northern
Toogoolawah	2	Brisbane West
Quinalow	3	Darling Downs
Herberton	3	Northern

* Class 2 school but size 3 as defined in Phase II study, i.e. 101-300 pupils.

In selecting the above schools another aim was to ensure a variety in the number of programs that had been submitted by the schools. The number of programs submitted by the selected schools between 1980 and March 1982 varied from zero to nine.

A further consideration during the selection process was the variety of programs that had been submitted recently by the schools. Care was taken to have school initiated programs that were representative of the overall funding trends. By way of illustration, Tables B and C show a

comparison in approval status and funding type between the programs in the Phase II selected schools and those programs described in Phase I of the evaluation. It is to be expected that some population shifts may have occurred in the time interval between Phase I and Phase II. There *should, however,* be enough similarity to make judgments on the representativeness of the programs in the sample schools.

Table B: Approval status

APPROVAL STATUS	PROGRAMS IN PHASE II SAMPLE		PROGRAMS FROM PHASE I	
	N	Column Percentage	N	Column Percentage
Completely Approved	47	66.2	405	65.2
Partly Approved	21	29.6	130	20.9
Not Approved	3	4.2	86	13.8
TOTAL	71*	100.0	621	100.0

* This comparison includes only those programs which had been submitted by schools and funded by the SPSS Committee (school initiated programs). Apart from the systems initiated additional general aide entitlement, a further nine programs were also discussed in the schools which were visited. Two of the nine programs were systems initiated equipment and materials; three programs were pending approval: and four submissions were being prepared at the time of the visit.

Table C: Funding type frequency distribution*

The Program *includes* funding for . . . **	PROGRAMS IN PHASE II N	PROGRAMS IN PHASE II Percentage of Total (N=68)	PROGRAMS FROM PHASE I Percentage of Total (N=535)
1. Equipment and Materials	57	83.8	62.8
• Classroom Curriculum	18	26.5	23.4
• School Library	3	4.4	2.6
• Audio-visual (Reception)	10	14.7	13.5
• Audio-visual (Expression)	7	10.3	2.6
• Reprographics	1	1.5	7.3
• Computing	1	1.5	0.4
• Capital	12	17.6	11.8
• Outdoor Equipment	6	8.8	6.0
• Other	6	8.8	13.5
2. Personnel	6	8.8	24.9
3. Excursions	10	14.7	18.9

* This distribution includes only those school initiated programs which had been funded by the SPSS Committee (completely approved or partly approved). It does not include any systems initiated programs.

** For a complete description of these categories refer to *Evaluation of the Special Program Schools Scheme:* Phase I set of tables, Research Branch, November 1981, pp. 74-75.

Finally, the selected schools satisfied another criterion which was deemed important in the school visits, namely, a variety in the degree of principals' experience in the Scheme. Table D shows the number of years that principals had been at their present SPSS schools.

Table D: Principals' SPSS experience

	Year of Commencement at Present SPSS School				
	Before 1979	1979	1980	1981	1982
Number of Principals*	1	2	3	11	7

* At one school, the deputy principal was interviewed and not the principal. His SPSS experience has also been entered into the statistic.

APPENDIX 3

PHASE II INTERVIEW SCHEDULE — PRINCIPALS OF SPSS SCHOOLS

SCHOOL: ..... PRINCIPAL: .....

GETTING ON THE SCHEME	NOTES
1. How did you get to know about the scheme? • Did you obtain information from *SPSS*? What? How? • Did you obtain information from the *regional directorate*, *inspectors*? What? How? • Did you obtain information in *other ways*? What? How?	
2. (If applicable) What prompted you to think that you'd be eligible to enter the scheme?	
3. (If applicable) What steps did you have to undertake to get on the scheme? • *questionnaire*: How accurate a picture does it portray of your school? • *regional directorate*: What role did it play? • Which do you think was the most influential in your school being accepted as a member of SPSS — questionnaire, directorate, other?	
4. (If applicable) How adequate do you think is the screening process? Is there any way in which you'd like to see it improved?	
5. (If applicable) Did you encounter any difficulties when applying to become a member of the Special Program Schools Scheme? • How many times did your school have to apply? • How long did it take for you to receive notice of a decision?	

Submission Writing (School Initiated Programs) 6. How does the school arrive at the types of programs that you're going to apply for? • Is there a regular procedure or is it 'apply as the need arises'? • How do you assess the priority of your needs? • Who is involved in the selection process? • Did anyone offer advice concerning the types of programs to select? If so, who? How beneficial was this?	
7. How does the school go about writing its submissions? • Who are the main contributors? Principal, teachers, parents, community? • How long does a submission usually take to write? *New*? *Continuing*? • When is most of the writing done? During school time, outside school time? • Do the writers receive any kind of help? Who? How effective is this advice?	
8. How appropriate is the submission writing format? • *New* submissions? *Continuing* submissions? • What sections of the format are most beneficial? Are there any parts that should not be required? • Is there any other form of application that you would prefer? Structured form? Checklist? • Which programs do you favour — New or continuing? Why? • Is there anything else that you'd like to add concerning submission writing?	

Submission to Implementation (School Initiated Programs) 9. What do you think of the procedure for submitting programs? • Role of the regional directorate? • How long does it usually take for you to receive word about the approval (or not approval) of your programs? What has been the longest time? What has been the shortest time? • Has the time gap affected the implementation of any of your programs? Which programs have been affected the most?	
10. What do you think of the procedure for informing schools of the results of the SPSS committee's decisions? • Is there any consultation with the section concerning the decisions that are made? What form does this take? • Is there sufficient information supplied and reasons given, especially concerning partly approved and not approved programs?	
11. What do you think of the procedure for supplying schools with their programs? • What do you think of the central buying procedure? • Do you always receive the equipment that you want, or alternatively, a suitable substitute? • How long does it usually take to implement your program after receiving notice from the SPSS committee? (see Q 9 for further questions)	
12. Have you had any programs in which you had difficulty in getting underway? • Is there anything that you'd like to add before we proceed to the next section?	

Implementation and Evaluation (School Initiated Programs) 13. (a) Overall, how successful do you find the programs have been? In what ways? (b) Have you had any programs which you would regard as having been unsuccessful?	
14. In general, which programs do you think have been more successful than others. Why has this been so?	
15. In general what criteria do you think should be applied when judging the effect of programs?	
16. Have you carried out an evaluation of your programs? • Has a report been submitted? • Have you faced any difficulties in evaluating your program? • Is there anything that you'd like to add before we proceed to the next section?	
Other SPSS Programs 17. In what ways, if any, has the general aide entitlement contributed to the running of your school?	
18. In what ways, if any, have other systems level programs contributed to the running of your school?	
19. (a) Which kind of funding do you favour? Systems initiated funding or school initiated funding? (b) Should there be a change in the percentage of funds allocated to each of the two funding types? Increase? Decrease? The same as now?	

Finis 20. (a) Ideally, how long do you think your school should continue as a member of SPSS? (b) If SPSS funding was to cease tomorrow, what effect would this decision have on your school? • Are there any other funding programs with which the school is involved? How does SPSS compare with these? • How important is SPSS in the overall funding pattern of the school?	
21. From your experience being a member of SPSS, are there any changes that you'd like to make to have things moving more smoothly, more effectively?	

APPENDIX 4

PHASE II INTERVIEW SCHEDULE — TEACHERS AND COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES

SCHOOL: ..... TEACHER: .....

	NOTES
1. How did you first become involved in the scheme? • Did you initiate this program? • Who asked you to write the submission? • Have you been involved in other programs? • Which ones, and in what way?	
2. What was your role, if any, in planning the program? • Who else was involved? • From whom have you received advice? • What exactly did the planning entail? • How much time was involved? • Was this work done at school? At home? • What difficulties did you encounter? • How appropriate was the submission format?	
3. What is/was your role in the implementation of this program? • What was actually done? • Who else was involved? • Was there any community participation? • What difficulties did you encounter? • Were there any delays?	
4. What advice did you receive in implementing this program? • From Principal, other teachers, students, community, SPSS, Region • How effective was this advice?	

5. Has your involvement with this program changed your job as a teacher within the school in any way? • Relationships with staff, parents, students, community? • Work load? • Involvement with other projects within the school, extra-curricula?	
6. How successful do you think the program has been? • What did you want the program to do? • Who has benefited? • What needs is the program fulfilling? • Has it achieved these ends? • What is the most important benefit, the program has given the school? • Is there any aspect which has not worked very well?	
7. In summary, what criteria do you think should be applied when judging the effect of your program?	
8. Has an evaluation of your program been done? • What were the findings? • Who was responsible? • How was it carried out? • Was a report submitted? To whom? • Would you have a copy, (if it hasn't been sent to SPSS).	
9. From your experience with this program are there any changes that you'd like, to have things moving more smoothly, more effectively?	

APPENDIX 5

OBSERVATION CHECKLIST FOR EQUIPMENT/MATERIAL

SCHOOL: ..... ITEM: .....

	NOTES
Year purchased	
General condition	
Is periodical maintenance carried out?	
Is anyone in particular responsible for its care?	
Present position	
Normal storage position	
Was a storage provided in the submission?	
How often is it used?	
When was it last used?	
Who uses it?	
Observed problems	
How appropriate is it for its intended use?	
Could a more modern purchase perform the intended task appreciably better?	

APPENDIX 6

PHASE II SCHOOL INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS

Table E: Administrators Interviews (N=24)

Personnel Participating in Each Interview	Number of Interviews Held
1 secondary principal, 1 deputy principal and 1 senior mistress	1
1 primary deputy principal	1
1 secondary principal	3
1 primary principal	19

Table F: Teacher and community representative interviews (N=37)

Personnel Participating in Each Interview	Number of Interviews Held
1 primary community representative	2
5 primary community representatives	1
1 primary community representative plus 1 primary teacher	1
1 primary teacher	11
1 primary tutor (SPSS funded)	1
1 secondary teacher plus 1 deputy principal	1
1 secondary teacher plus 1 deputy principal	1
2 secondary teachers	2
1 secondary teacher	16
1 secondary supply B (SPSS funded)	1

APPENDIX 7

OBSERVED PROBLEMS WITH EQUIPMENT AND MATERIALS

In ten programs, specific problems were observed and these are listed below:

- Problems associated with condition of equipment and materials

  re sports oval: There was inadequate grass coverage possibly due to inadequate specifications.

  re model office: The IBM typewriter maintenance contract was reported as expensive.

  re a program involving audio-visual kits: The kit holders were too small to keep the contents in good order.

- Problems associated with use of equipment and materials

  re a woodwork program: Some hand tools were too large for the primary students to use easily.

  re television (two programs): The aerial cable appeared to be wrong impedance for good reception.

  re an outdoor classroom: The classroom was too small for some classes (Works Department specifications prevented a larger area from being used in the position chosen).

  re a library program (book and non-book materials): Many of the items were out of date as the submission was drawn up about a year before they were purchased.

  re a remedial program: Part of the equipment was not supplied.

  re a reprographics program: The drafting pens were locked away in a separate room from the drafting boards causing inconvenience when the boards were to be used.